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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers 2017



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Acronyms

DHS	Demographic and health survey
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
HBS	Household budget survey
ICF	International Classification of Functioning
I-PMM	Iraq Poverty and Maternal Mortality Survey
LFS	Labour force survey
NSO	National statistical offices
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WG	Washington Group on Disability Statistics
WG-SS	Washington Group Short Set (of questions on functioning)

Revisions and Updates on Country Files

April 2018 the following updates were done:

- Introduction note additions are highlighted in shaded yellow
- A technical note was added for each of Saudi Arabia and Yemen – with regard to Table 7 on “reason” - One single reason was asked to a multi code question on type of disability.
- Jordan - Table 2 corrected to reflect the number of people suffering from more than one disability.
- Saudi Arabia deleted Table 2 – Awaiting correction to reflect the number of people suffering from more than one disability
- Tunis - added Table 1
- Sudan - added Table 2
- Iraq – new tables replaced old to reflect highest level of difficulty in compiling each table.
- Egypt – added tables 8,9,11,12 and 14
- Palestine – added explanatory note on definition on “Camps” in the Country Technical Notes

September 2018

- Updated the first note under table 2 (deleted Egypt)
- Table on population and sample size and respective prevalence’s’ as provided by the countries

November 2018

The following note “The numbers provided are after weighted the sample” was added for each of Iraq and Yemen

Introduction

Improvements in the collection, analysis and availability of disability statistics are crucial to promote sound, evidence-based policymaking and programming decisions. The importance of data for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies for the social inclusion of persons with disability is expressed in article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its call for the disaggregation of indicators by disability status.

Paragraph 48 of the Declaration of the 2030 Agenda states that:

Indicators are being developed to assist this work. Quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. Such data is key to decision-making.

Indicators to measure achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (General Assembly resolution 68/261 of 29 January 2014).

Regional analysis using published national data on disability cannot be undertaken for reasons that include: (a) variation in definition or cut-off measures from standards; (b) lack of comparison with people without disabilities; and (c) lack of disaggregation and cross-tabulation of data in main socioeconomic areas. However, when national household survey and population census data are collected and compiled in accordance with international standards, data on disability prevalence are harmonized and comparable between countries.

In the Arab region, an increasing number of countries have been following the Washington Group (WG) approach as per the recommendation of the fifth meeting of the Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses (Beirut, March 2009), and in line with Revision 2 of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Census. As a result, data on disability are more readily available and harmonized.

The e-publication *Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers* is based on national data, harmonized to the extent possible, to allow for regional analysis, based on different sources such as population censuses and household surveys for poverty, labour force, health and household budget, cross-cutting in a number of socioeconomic areas.

Disability Statistics Programme

In 2016, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Statistics Division initiated the Disability Statistics Programme and implemented three activities in its framework in the region. In June 2006, ESCWA had developed a questionnaire on disability statistics to compile national data from national statistical offices (NSOs) on disability, cross-tabulated with a number of socioeconomic fields such as age, marital status, living arrangements, family size, education, employment, occupation and sector. Information in areas such as access to resources, wealth, violence and benefits were scarce or did not comply with international standards. All tables were disaggregated by sex and geographical area. Available data are presented in the present publication.

The process of collecting disability statistics provides valuable information and generates the information needed for evidence-based policymaking. In the process of compiling and verifying the data, ESCWA built the capacity of member States, identified weaknesses and strengths and made recommendations for future improvements. Seventeen countries were engaged in the data collection process initiated by the Statistics Division of ESCWA.

Two meetings were also organized in the framework of the Disability Statistics Programme. The first one was held in Muscat from 14 to 16 March 2017, in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division, under the title “Regional Meeting on Disability Measurement and Statistics in Support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme”. The objectives were to take stock of good practices and enhance countries’ understanding of disability concepts and definitions and produce updated global guidelines. The second meeting was held in Casablanca, Morocco in April 2017, in cooperation with the WG, under the title “Regional Workshop on Improving Disability Statistics”. It focused on best practices for implementing the Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) of questions, reviewed challenges encountered in collecting disability statistics, and proposed improvements to practices of implementation of the WG-SS questions. The aim was to prepare a guidebook to improve disability data collection and analysis in the Arab countries using the WG questions.

Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers E-publication

The main purpose of *Arab Disability in Numbers* is to present the situation of persons with disabilities in comparison with those with no disabilities in numbers. All data featured are national data compiled and verified by the ESCWA Statistics Division in cooperation with member countries.

Methodology

The e-publication Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers is based on national data compiled and verified from NSOs through a questionnaire specially designed to address the needs of policymakers in the region, and those related to monitoring of the SDGs and, most importantly, of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The data collected provide a wealth of information on persons with disabilities in areas such as demography, education, employment, occupation, and industry, disaggregated by sex and geographical area.

Countries in the region have a diverse experience in compiling disability statistics from different sources, such as population censuses and household surveys for poverty, labour force, health and household budget. Those that replied to the questionnaire fall in two categories: countries that applied the WG-SS of questions and those that did not. Table 1 provides a list of countries that applied the WG-SS on functioning in their censuses and household surveys and countries that did not apply the WG-SS.

Table 1. Countries using the WG-SS of questions on functioning in census and household surveys

Censuses		Household Surveys	
Jordan	Census 2015	Egypt	LFS 2016
Morocco	Census 2014	Iraq	I-PMM 2013
Oman	Census 2010	Lebanon	HBS 2011
Qatar	Census 2010	Saudi Arabia	DHS 2016
State of Palestine	Census 2007	United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi)	LFS 2014
Tunisia	Census 2014	Yemen	HBS 2014

Table 2. Countries not using the WG-SS of questions on functioning in census and household surveys

Censuses		Household Surveys	
Bahrain	Census 2010	Syria	Budget Survey 2007
Sudan	Census 2008	Libya	PAPFAM 2014
Mauritania	Census 2013		

Abbreviations: DHS, demographic and health survey; HBS, household budget survey; I-PMMS, Iraq Poverty and Maternal Mortality Survey; LFS, labour force survey.

Notes:

- *Data for Qatar and Tunis (WG) in addition to Sudan and Syria (Non-WG), are in the compilation process. Data will be published once verified.*
- *Data from Oman and Saudi Arabia are for nationals only.*

The WG-SS approach identifies people as having a disability if they have a lot of difficulty doing at least one basic activity in a core functional domain: seeing, hearing, mobility, cognition (remembering/concentrating), communication or self-care. The questions are designed to identify persons who are at greater risk than the general population of experiencing restrictions in participation in society. They were selected based on two criteria: (a) they cover the large majority of functional limitations that people might have; and (b) they are functional domains that can be adequately captured with a single question.

However, few countries did not include all six domains of the short set questions. For cultural reasons, some excluded ‘self-care’, another country excluded the essential domain of ‘cognition’ (remembering/concentrating), while others added ‘upper body’ from the WG extended domains. Therefore, caution should be exercised when comparing together countries as per the domains used in identifying disability.

The four response categories, which capture the full spectrum of functioning are: “No, no difficulty”; “Yes, some difficulty”; “Yes, a lot of difficulty”; and “Cannot do at all”. For the purposes of international comparisons, the WG recommends that those with disability be defined as those who answer the questions with “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all”.

Countries that did not apply the WG methodology have applied either two response categories—“yes” or “no”— or three response categories—“yes, difficult/severe” or “yes, limited/moderately” or “no”. In the ESCWA questionnaire, countries that have not applied the WG methodology aligned their response categories, as per their national definitions, with those of the WG by considering people with disabilities as those under response categories “yes”, and “yes, difficult/severe” and those without disabilities as those under response categories “yes, limited/moderately” and “no”.

Moreover, countries using the WG-SS of questions implemented differently how the questions were asked; some countries used a multi-code question, where the respondent could select, correctly, more than one difficulty (Table 3- example A), and few other countries used a single code question, where the respondent could select only one type of difficulty (Table 4- example B).

Table 3 - Example A: Yemen using a multi-code option to the WG-SS

The next questions ask about difficulties you/ (NAME) may have doing certain activities because of a HEALTH PROBLEM	Do you/ (NAME) have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?	Do you/ (NAME) have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?	Do you/ (NAME) have difficulty walking or climbing steps?	Do you/ (NAME) have difficulty remembering or concentrating?	Do you/ (NAME) have difficulty with self-care such as washing all over or dressing?	Using your usual language, do you/ (NAME) have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?
	1 NO DIFFICULTY	1 NO DIFFICULTY	1 NO DIFFICULTY	1 NO DIFFICULTY	1 NO DIFFICULTY	1 NO DIFFICULTY
	2 SOME DIFFICULTY	2 SOME DIFFICULTY	2 SOME DIFFICULTY	2 SOME DIFFICULTY	2 SOME DIFFICULTY	2 SOME DIFFICULTY
	3 A LOT OF DIFFICULTY	3 A LOT OF DIFFICULTY	3 A LOT OF DIFFICULTY	3 A LOT OF DIFFICULTY	3 A LOT OF DIFFICULTY	3 A LOT OF DIFFICULTY
	4 CANNOT DO AT ALL	4 CANNOT DO AT ALL	4 CANNOT DO AT ALL	4 CANNOT DO AT ALL	4 CANNOT DO AT ALL	4 CANNOT DO AT ALL

Table 4- Example B: Oman using a single-code option to the WG-SS

What is the main type of disability the person is suffering from?
Classification answers:
Seeing, even if wearing glasses
Hearing, even if wearing earphone
Mobility (Walking or climbing stairs)
Cognition (Remembering or concentrating)
Self-care
Communicating in normal language
Movement of the upper part of the body

It is therefore, imperative when conducting a comparative analysis to group those countries that applied the Washington group separately from those that did not. Moreover, it is necessary to separate those that applied the Washington Group short set of questions with a multi-code system from those countries that applied a single-code per person (Table below). Two countries, Egypt and Oman, used the Washington Group short set of questions, but with a single code which is incorrectly applied. Both countries also used a screening question, which is considered a deterrent to revealing a difficulty and consequently have an impact on prevalence rates. Saudi Arabia and Tunis applied correctly the WG-SS multi-code system but used a screening question not in accordance with international recommendations.

Table 5. Countries using multi and single coded WG-SS of questions on functioning and a screening question

	Country	Single (SC) /Multi Code (MC)	Screening question	Reason per domain
WG-SS	Egypt	SC	1	0
	Oman	SC	1	0
	Jordan	MC	0	0
	Saudi Arabia	MC	1	0
	Tunis	MC	1	1
	Iraq	MC	0	1
	Morocco	MC	0	0
	Palestine	MC	0	1
	Qatar	MC	0	0
	Yemen	MC	0	0
Not WG	Bahrain	SC	1	0
	Mauritania	SC	0	0
	Sudan	MC	0	0
	Syria	SC	0	0

The Washington Group recommends that prevalence rates for disability, for all six domains at three levels of difficulties, are to be calculated as per the highest difficulty of any of the six domains. Moreover, the Washington Group does not recommend using reason, as it does not answer any policy question. However, some countries have added incorrectly a reason after each domain which may have affected the results, such as in Iraq, Palestine and Tunisia. Other countries have added only one single reason without specifying the related domain; such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

The population and sample size and respective prevalences' as provided by the countries are presented in the table below:

		After weighted the sample		Before weighted the sample		
Household Surveys		Age group of target population	Population size	Household size	Population sample size	Household sample size
Egypt	LFS 2016	6+			780,076	83,948
Iraq	I-PMM 2013	All ages	34,205,037	5,540,788	1,966,541	307,494
Saudi Arabia	DHS 2016	All ages /Only nationals			20,064,970	33,350
Yemen	HBS 2014	All ages	25,993,456	3,650,322	67,211	9,391

<i>Syria</i>	Budget Survey 2007	All ages	19,172,000			
<i>Lebanon</i>	HBS 2011	All ages	3,779,871			
<i>Libya</i>	PAPFAM 2014	All ages			101,870	41,822

Censuses		Census Age group target population	Population size	Household size
<i>Bahrain</i>	Census 2010	All ages	1,234,571	156,623
Jordan	Census 2015	5+	9,180,529	1,977,534
<i>Mauritania</i>	Census 2013	All ages	3,537,368	575,678
Morocco	Census 2014	All ages	33,610,084	7,313,806
Oman	Census 2010	All ages /Only nationals	1,957,336 Omani	260,120 Omani
Qatar	Census 2010	All ages	1,699,435	146,707
State of Palestine	Census 2007	All ages /Only nationals	3,434,970	629,253
<i>Sudan</i>	Census 2008	All Ages	30,504,165	5,084,028
Tunisia	Census 2014	All ages	10.982.476	2.712.974

The e-publication will be updated periodically as countries collect more disability statistics. The scope of areas will also be expanded to allow further in-depth analysis in the future. The Statistics Division will publish a technical report with a statistical analysis on Disability Indicators and the Sustainable Development Agenda for the Arab Region in 2018.