

## INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Public Health Service stresses the need for accurate and timely public health surveillance data to be available in a useable form, and has included surveillance activities among its *Healthy People 2000 National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1991). An important use of health data is to assess quality of life as well as length of life.

The limitations of activities questions were developed by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) (National Center for Health Statistics, April 1995) to estimate the “Years of Healthy Life” for a given population. The questions that were excerpted for use in the 1996 Utah Health Status Survey began by screening household members for any sort of limitations in their usual activities. This was accomplished with the following screening question:

The next few questions are about limitations in daily or usual activities for all household members. Are you, or is anyone in your household currently limited in ANY WAY in performing their usual activities because of an impairment or health problem?

If the respondent answered that there was someone in the household who was limited, they were asked to identify which household members were limited. A series of questions was then asked about each person in the household who was reported to have a limitation. Those questions assessed the extent of the household member’s limitation based on their ability to perform their major activity. For persons age 64 and under, the severity of the limitation was classified as either “limited in major activity,” “unable to perform major activity,” or “limited in some other way.” The major activity was age-related. That is, preschoolers were asked about their ability to participate in play activities, school-age children were asked about school activities, and working age adults were asked about work and housekeeping activities. For persons age 65 and over the categories used were “limited in instrumental activities of daily living” (IADL), or “limited in activities of daily living” (ADL). Instrumental activities of daily living were defined as “routine needs, such as everyday household chores, doing necessary business, shopping, or getting around for other purposes.” Activities of daily living (ADL) for persons age 65 and older were defined as, “personal care needs, such as eating, bathing, dressing, or getting around home.”

Note: The methodology developed by NCHS does not begin with a screening question. We believe that our methodology may have underestimated the proportion of people with limitations, perhaps by as much as half, when compared with the results obtained with the NCHS methodology.

The survey also asked, “What is the nature of the impairment or health problem?” That question was asked “open-ended,” that is, the interviewer asked the question, but did not suggest any possible responses. The respondent provided the information, and the interviewer then coded it into one of the pre-coded categories. If he or she could not decide which category to use, the response was recorded verbatim, and later coded into one of the existing categories, made into a new category, or coded as “other.” The list of pre-coded categories was developed using the results of the open-ended responses to the same question on the 1991 survey.

The information in this report is presented in detail in the Reference Tables on pages 13 through 27. The highlights of the findings are presented in graphical form in the Highlights section, beginning on page 1.

The report first presents an overview of people who were reported as having any sort of a limitation. Reference tables 1 and 2 report differences in the likelihood of having a limitation by age and sex, household income, and other demographic variables. Table 3 reports the likelihood of having a limitation for people who also reported having selected chronic medical conditions or injuries, and according to general health status.

The following sections report limitations by demographic, health, and lifestyle variables for each of four age groups. Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 report limitations by demographic and other variables for children age 17 and under, persons age 18 to 44, age 45 to 64, and age 65 and over. Those tables also report on the severity of the limitation and the nature or cause of the limitation where it was known.