



New Measures for Assessing Community Participation



Background

Three surveys are being developed and tested in the project. They can be scored to allow for comparison between individuals with similar impairments and limitations.

- The Characteristics of the Respondent (CORE)
- The Participation of People with Impairments and Limitations Survey (PARTS/G)
- The Survey of Participation and Receptivity in Communities (SPARC)

CORE

The Characteristics of the Respondent was designed to help researchers understand what personal factors influence participation for people with disabilities. The measurement tool inquires about personal demographics, benefits received, any disabling conditions (physical, visual, hearing, cognitive or emotional impairment), primary diagnosis for each identified disabling condition, and secondary conditions.

PARTS/G

The Participation of People with Impairments and Limitations Survey covers a variety of aspects of participation in 24 different major life activities performed in the home and community. A participation score can be calculated for each activity and for the impact of supports (such as assistive technology and personal assistance services).

The PARTS-G asks questions about how much time or how frequently participants do these activities in their daily lives. It also questions the participant about the difficulty, pain and fatigue they have while doing the activities and any support they use.

The Bottom Line

This purpose of this project is to further develop and refine a system of measurement that examines the person and environment factors that function as either barriers or facilitators to community participation for individuals with disabilities.

This information will help researchers and practitioners develop new approaches for improving community participation.

Figure 1 (*see back page*) is an example of how the PARTS-G can be used to examine evaluative participation (choice, satisfaction, and control) scores in activities within a domain. It compares evaluation scores for individuals with hearing loss, low vision, and individuals who use power wheelchairs, manual chair or canes/crutches/walkers.

SPARC

The Survey of Participation and Receptivity in Communities is a self-reported measure of quality of participation in 19 community sites. Using the SPARC, a total participation score can be calculated per site for the responsiveness of people at the site and for the accessibility at each site.

For each site, participants report their community participation with respect to importance, control, choice, satisfaction, pain and fatigue, difficulty in doing activities with and without support, physical factors in

(over)

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Figure 1. PARTS-G: Participation Evaluation in Self Care Activities

PW - power wheelchair
MW - manual wheelchair
CCW - cane, crutches or walker

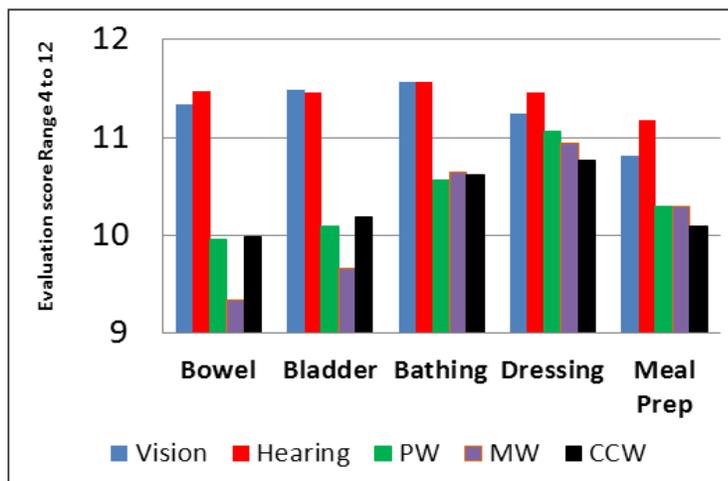
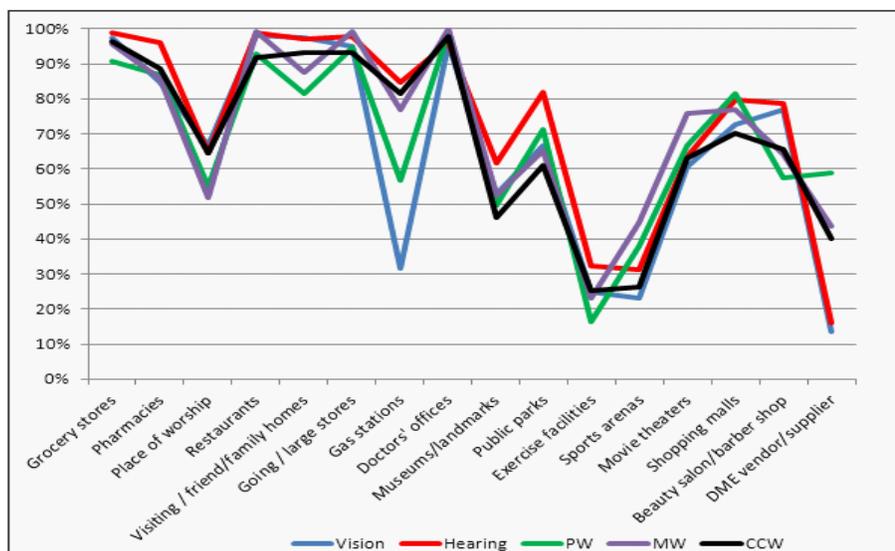


Figure 2. SPARC: Percent of Sample Participating at Community Sites



the environment, interpersonal responses of people at the site, and use of transportation to visit the site. This assesses the person's participation across environments.

Figure 2 is an example of how data from the SPARC can be used to examine the participation of individuals in various sites in the community.

Testing the Surveys

The surveys have been filled out by a national sample of individuals who are between the ages of 18 and 75, live in the community, have access to a computer, can read at or above the 6th grade level, can enter responses into a web-based survey or direct another individual to enter their responses into a web-based survey, have a mobility impairment, a low-vision visual impairment (i.e. the individual has not been medically diagnosed as blind but self-identifies as having very low vision) or a hearing impairment (i.e. the individual has not been medically diagnosed as deaf but self-identifies as being hard of hearing).

Participants were asked to complete either the CORE and PARTS/G or the CORE and SPARC surveys. Participants were recruited from a variety of organizations that work with people with disabilities. Information on the study was advertised through Independent Living Research Utilization and disability-related web sites such as Wheelchair Junkie and Pride Mobility.



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