

Compared to people without disabilities, people with disabilities get more preventive care but less dental care.

Introduction

Adults with disabilities develop more long-term health problems than those without. This problem is especially bad for people with physical disabilities. Getting regular checkups and preventive care can help to keep people healthy.

Study Goal

We looked at whether adults with physical disabilities were more or less likely than adults without disabilities to have:

- blood pressure checks
- flu shots
- annual dental checkups.

Population studied

We used data from the Medical Expenditures Panel Survey (MEPS). The MEPS is a national survey of healthcare use. Our study had 75,145 people in it who were between 18 and 64 years old. We divided our sample into:

- people who had physical disabilities
- people who had other types of disabilities
- people with no disabilities.

Main results of study

Compared to people with no disabilities...

...people with any disabilities were more likely to get blood pressure checks. (92% of those with disabilities vs. 70% of those without.)

...people with physical disabilities were more likely to get a flu shot. (40% vs. 23%.)

...people with any disabilities were less likely to have gotten a dental check-up. (45% vs. 59%.)

Why is this important?

This study shows that people with disabilities in the U.S. get more preventive services than those without disabilities. However, they get less dental care. Most people with disabilities have health insurance, but less than half of them have dental coverage. Policymakers could consider offering more dental insurance to people with disabilities.



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