

Disability Index for the General Household Survey

Overview: Arber et al developed a simple disability index for surveying disability in the elderly based on observation of daily life. The index can also be used in other patient populations including psychiatric patients.

Survey Questions: "Do you usually manage to"

- (1) get up and down stairs?
- (2) get around the house?
- (3) get in and out of bed?
- (4) cut your toenails yourself?
- (5) bath shower or wash all over?
- (6) go out and walk down the road?

Response	Points
on your own without difficulty	0
on your own but with difficulty	1
only with help from someone else	2
not at all	2

disability index = SUM(points for all 6 questions)

Interpretation: minimum score: 0 and maximum score: 12

Score	Disability
0	none
1 or 2	slight
3 – 5	moderate
6 – 8	severe
9 – 12	very severe

According to Arber the index has a coefficient of reproducibility of 0.94 and a coefficient of scalability of 0.63.

References: Arber S Ginn J. Gender and Later Life. SAGE Publications. 1991. Appendix B: Construction of a disability index from the 1985 General Household Survey.

Cheng HS Wang LC. Amoebiasis among institutionalized psychiatric patients in Taiwan. Epidemiol Infect. 1999; 122: 317-322 (page 321).