



Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System – Data to Action

Difficulty in performing daily activities among individuals who recently gave birth, New York State,* 2019-2020

September 2022

Background

A disability is any physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities for an individual.¹ About 26 percent of adults in the United States (US) have some type of disability, and nearly one in five women aged 18-44 years report disability.²

Individuals with disabilities who experience pregnancy are at increased risk for pregnancy-related health complications and having newborns with poorer infant health. Previous studies show that individuals with disabilities were at increased risk for hypertension, cesarean delivery, gestational diabetes, and having infants with low birth weight compared to individuals without disabilities.³⁻⁵ To reduce adverse health outcomes, it is important to understand the prevalence of disabilities among pregnant individuals and identify those at higher risk in New York State (NYS) and promote access to available resources.

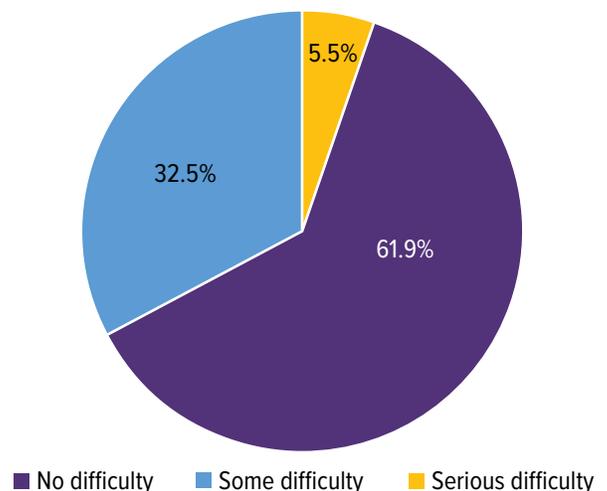
The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) annually collects data from a representative sample of individuals about their experiences before, during, and after pregnancy. The PRAMS program aims to reduce infant and maternal morbidity and mortality by providing NYS specific data that can inform health programs and help improve maternal and child health. Among individuals who gave birth in 2019 and 2020, the NYS PRAMS program collected responses to questions regarding difficulties performing different daily activities, with serious difficulty being defined by responses of “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all”.[†] Long-term or temporary disability may be indicated by respondents who reported serious difficulty with performing any of the activities.

Difficulty performing activities

In 2019-2020, 1,455 individuals who recently gave birth in NYS outside of New York City responded to questions about the difficulty they experienced in performing any of six different activities at the time of the survey: seeing, hearing, walking/climbing steps, remembering/concentrating, self-care, and communicating. Individuals reported on the level of difficulty for each activity on a scale from “no difficulty” to “some difficulty” to “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all.”

- About **one in three** individuals (**32.5 percent**) reported some difficulty in performing one or more of the six activities (**Figure 1**).
- About **one in 20** individuals (**5.5 percent**) reported serious difficulty in performing one or more of the six activities (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Level of difficulty performing any of six activities among individuals who recently gave birth in New York State,* PRAMS, 2019-2020



*New York State outside of New York City.
[†]See Survey Questions for more details.

- *Difficulty remembering or concentrating* was the highest prevalence of difficulty reported with **23.5 percent** of individuals reporting some difficulty and **3.7 percent** reporting serious difficulty (Table 1). It should be noted that reports about difficulty remembering or concentrating may reflect cognitive changes during pregnancy and the postpartum period rather than a long-term difficulty.⁶
- *Difficulty in seeing, even with visual aids*, was the second most reported difficulty experienced with **13.8 percent** reporting some difficulty and **1.2 percent** reporting serious difficulty (Table 1).

Table 1: Difficulty performing any of six activities among individuals who recently gave birth, New York State,* PRAMS, 2019-2020

Type and level of difficulty	Estimated number of people affected	Weighted percent	95% Confidence interval
Difficulty remembering or concentrating			
Some difficulty	23,861	23.5	20.8 – 26.5
Serious difficulty	3,767	3.7	2.6 – 5.3
Difficulty seeing			
Some difficulty	13,943	13.8	11.6 – 16.4
Serious difficulty	1,238	1.2	0.6 – 2.4
Difficulty walking or climbing steps			
Some difficulty	8,066	8.0	6.2 – 10.2
Serious difficulty	318	0.3	0.1 – 0.8
Difficulty hearing			
Some difficulty	3,334	3.3	2.3 – 4.6
Serious difficulty	621	0.6	0.3 – 1.3
Difficulty in communicating			
Some difficulty	4,838	4.8	3.4 – 6.8
Serious difficulty	724	0.7 [†]	0.3 – 1.9
Difficulty in self-care			
Some difficulty	2,563	2.5	1.6 – 4.0
Serious difficulty	338	0.3 [†]	0.1 – 0.9

Individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience socioeconomic disparities. Additionally, those with disabilities may experience more barriers to accessing care and may be more vulnerable to adverse pregnancy outcomes.^{5,7-9} PRAMS data show that the prevalence of serious difficulty, which may indicate a disability, varied across different sociodemographic factors.

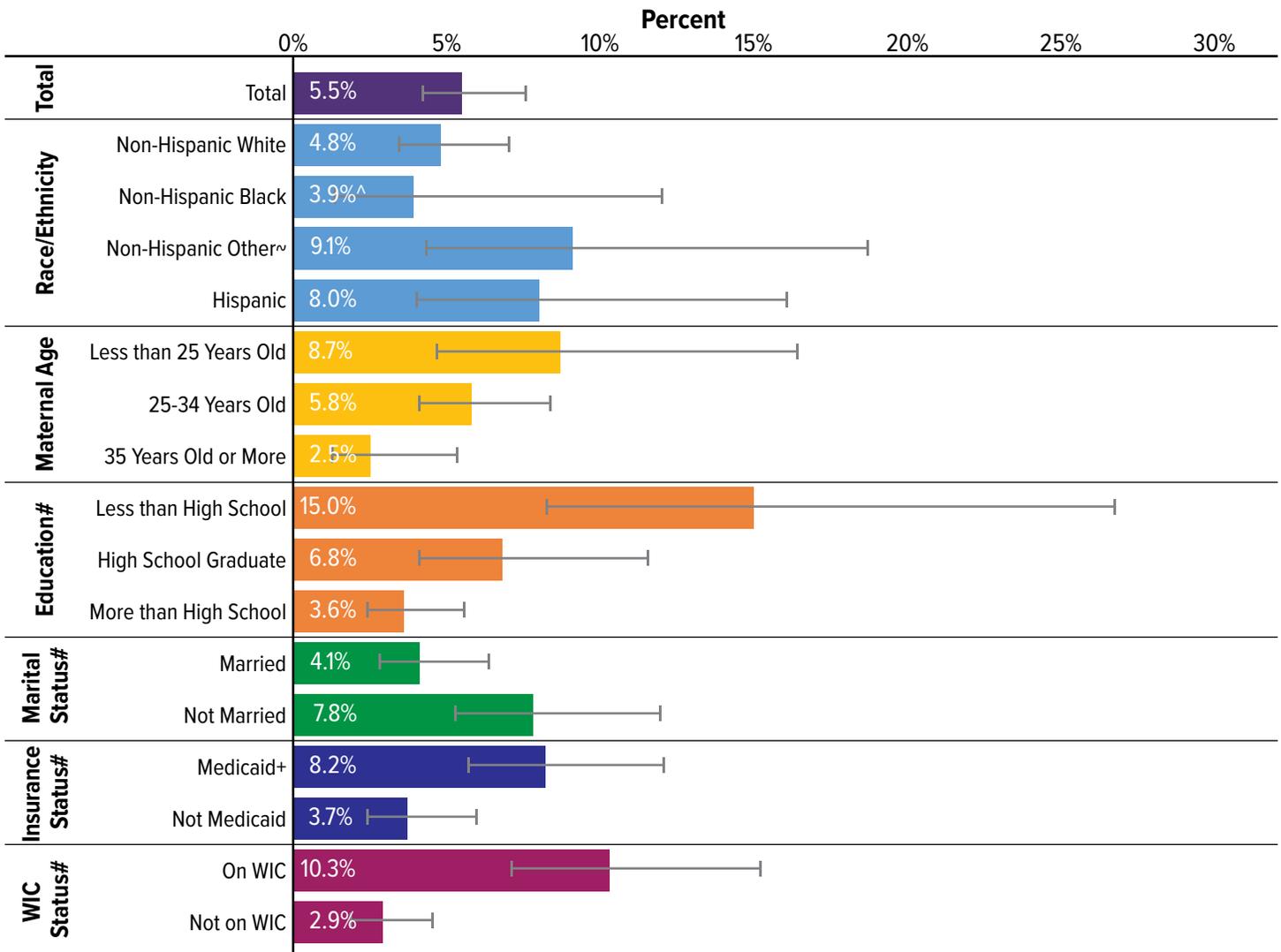
*New York State outside of New York City.

[†]Fewer than 10 events in the numerator; therefore, the rate is unstable.

The estimated number of people affected are the population estimates derived from weighted samples.

The prevalence of those who reported serious difficulty in performing one or more of the six activities was significantly higher among those with less than a high school education compared to those with more than a high school education (**15.0 percent** versus **3.6 percent**), who were unmarried compared to those married (**7.8 percent** versus **4.1 percent**), who were Medicaid members or on other forms of public insurance compared to non-Medicaid members (**8.2 percent** versus **3.7 percent**), and who were in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) compared to those who were not (**10.3 percent** versus **2.9 percent**) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Serious difficulty (a lot of difficulty or inability) in performing any of six activities among all individuals who recently gave birth, by demographic characteristics, New York State,* PRAMS, 2019-2020



Notes

- ~Non-Hispanic Other includes American Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, other Asian, other race, and mixed race.
- +Medicaid includes Medicaid and other forms of public insurance.
- [^]Fewer than 10 events in the numerator; therefore, rate is unstable.
- #P-value<0.05 with chi-square test

*New York State outside of New York City.

Summary

PRAMS data on difficulty experienced in performing any of six different activities (seeing, hearing, walking/climbing steps, remembering/concentrating, self-care, and communicating) among the NYS population show that:

- About **one in three** individuals reported some difficulty in performing one or more activity, and about **one in 20** reported serious difficulty.
- **Difficulty remembering or concentrating** was the highest reported prevalence, followed by **difficulty in seeing**.
- The prevalence of serious difficulty in performing one or more activity was higher among those who
 - had **less than a high school education**
 - were **unmarried**
 - were **Medicaid members or on other forms of public insurance**
 - were **in WIC**

Serious difficulty with an activity may be indicative of long-term or temporary disability. Individuals with disabilities who experience pregnancy are at increased risk for pregnancy-related health complications and poorer infant health, such as low birth weight.³⁻⁵ To reduce adverse health outcomes, it is important to raise awareness on the prevalence of disability among this vulnerable population and promote access to resources to individuals and providers.

Resources, services, and programs that assist individuals with disabilities

Multiple Systems Navigator

The Multiple Systems Navigator is a one-stop resource for finding and accessing multiple human service systems developed in collaboration with New York State agencies that assist individuals with disabilities. The website provides tools and up-to-date information on available services that a user may search according to their needs. Services linked through this website include disability services; accessibility, assistive technology, mobility, and communication services; mental and behavioral health services; employment services; and housing and housing supports.

- <https://www.msnavigator.org/>

Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)

The New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities coordinates services for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities and other neurological impairments. Supports and services include Medicaid-funded long-term services such as habilitation and clinical services; family support services; provision of assistive technology and environmental modifications; and help with employment, housing, and independent living.

- <https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services>

Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

The Office of Children and Family Services oversees the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) which provides direct services to legally blind New York State residents. Programs include independent living; vocational rehabilitation and help with employment; pre-employment services for youth; and programs for children and older adults.

- <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/nyscb/programs/>

Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA)

The Office of Temporary Disability Assistance administers programs that assist eligible families and individuals with finances, employment, housing, and childcare. Programs under the purview of OTDA include Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), and Temporary Assistance (TA).

- <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/>

Medicaid Health Homes – Comprehensive Care Management

New York State's Health Home program ensures individuals with chronic health problems enrolled in Medicaid can have health home management, where a group of providers work together to help deliver needed services. Services include connections to health care providers and mental health and substance abuse providers; accessibility to needed medications; help with housing; social services (such as food, benefits, and transportation); and other community programs.

- https://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/medicaid_health_homes/

New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL)

The New York Association on Independent Living is a membership organization representing all Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in New York State. ILCs advance the independence of New Yorkers with disabilities through advocacy, education, training, resources, referral, and the exchange of information. Other services may include assistance with housing, education, employment, medical needs, and personal attendant services.

- <https://ilny.us/programs>

A list of ILCs in New York State can be found here: <https://ilny.us/about>

New York State Education Department, Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

ACCES-VR assists eligible individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and supports independent living through training, education, rehabilitation, and career development.

- <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr>

A directory of ILCs in New York State can also be found here: <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/independent-living-centers>

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data Briefs

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual statewide random telephone and cellular surveillance survey of adults aged 18 years and older designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The BRFSS monitors risk behaviors and other factors contributing to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the population. Data from the BRFSS are useful for planning, initiating, and supporting health promotion and disease prevention programs. Annual data briefs on disability status among New York State adults are published by the New York State BRFSS on the New York State Department of Health webpage.

- <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/>

Survey Questions

PRAMS questions and possible responses on difficulty doing different activities

1. Do you have difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses or contact lenses?
2. Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid(s)?
3. Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?
4. Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?
5. Do you have difficulty with self care, such as washing all over or dressing?
6. Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example, understanding or being understood?

Select one response per question:

- No difficulty
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty
- I cannot do this at all

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