

**Provisional Abstract of a paper to be presented at the EAPS Conference 2006
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Title: **The effects of age, sex, education, family status, obesity and smoking on disability: a systematic literature review**

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Topic Area 9: Data and methods (if possible in specific session on 'MicMac')

Provisional abstract

A large and complex body of literature exists about the effects of various demographic and socio-demographic dimensions as well as of particular risk factors on disability. In a systematic literature review we focus on the effects of age, sex, education, family status, smoking and obesity on various indicators of disability. It is well known that the risk of disability increases exponentially with age, that women experience a higher risk of disability than men, that higher education reduces the risk of disability, that the married experience lower disability than the not married and that smoking is a clear risk factor of disability. Results are controversial for obesity and for the interaction between age and the various risk factors. In general the effects of risks factors tend to become smaller with age which is partly caused by selection effects. There exists, however, some indication that the risk profile changes with age. For example, a series of studies report positive effects of overweight on the health of the elderly while effects at younger ages are generally negative.

Performing a meta-analysis of existing studies one has to take into account the different study designs and the different definitions of disability. Many of the studies are based on private households only and exclude the institutionalized populations. Some of the studies include the disabled at baseline, others explore the risk of originally healthy people to become disabled during the follow-up. A large range of indicators of disability is used ranging from "Activities of Daily Living" to composite indicators such as the Katz, Nagi or Rosow-Breslau Indicator.

Our review is based (1) on a search of the databases Medline, PsychINFO and SOCA (Sociological Abstracts) under the surfaces OVID and CSA (Cambridge Scientific Abstracts Internet Database Service), on (2) references provided by experts and on (3) references derived from citations. Only articles that describe the outcome of longitudinal studies in industrialized countries (USA, European countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan) are considered. The search is restricted to the years 1985 to 2005.

In a first step we review about 2500 references that are derived from the logical combination of the key words (((disab\$ or impair\$ or limit\$ or decline) and function\$) or activities of daily living or mobility) AND ((study and cohort) or (study and longitudinal) or trial or follow up) AND ((life-style or socio-economic or education or marital status or obesity or obese or overweight or bmi or body mass index or smoking or cigarette\$ or tobacco or demograph\$) not child\$ not cross sectional not lung). The search is restricted to titles, abstracts and key-words. Special emphasis is put on details of the study design as well as on odds ratios, relative risks and healthy life expectancies reported in the studies.