



# Survey of Aging with a Disability: An Update

March 2013

## Funding Update

We're funded by the National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) with a 5 year grant. This September will bring the end of the grant. We have truly enjoyed working with you and hope to continue to work with you in the future.

We're working on securing additional funding to continue our work in aging with a physical disability. We'll keep you updated through our website, e-newsletter, and Facebook page.

Thank you for your participation and feedback over the years!

## Survey Update

### Year 4 Surveys Sent Out

We have sent out the last of our surveys and have received 1,590 back. Thank you for taking the time to complete and return your survey! We continue to analyze all data and write papers on our major findings.



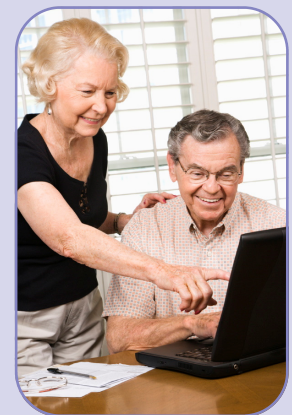
## Stay Connected

We're excited to announce the launch of our **new website!** The website is a true resource for people aging with a physical disability offering educational information and resources.

Stay connected to our research:

- News Blog
- Quarterly e-Newsletter—email us to sign-up!
- Facebook 

Check out our new website:  
<http://agerrtc.washington.edu>



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## New Evidence-Based Factsheets!

Learn more about how to age well with a physical disability with our new evidence-based factsheets on exercise, depression, sleep, and getting the most out of healthcare visits.

[agerrtc.washington.edu/info/factsheets](http://agerrtc.washington.edu/info/factsheets)

# Happiness Matters

Emotional health is an important part of quality of life in persons with disabilities, yet it's not studied as frequently as physical health. Emotional health includes depression, satisfaction and happiness.

In our survey, we used a happiness measure that includes 4 questions asking about happiness. Scores ranged from 1 to 7, where 7 suggests a high level of happiness, and a 1 suggests a low level of happiness. We looked at levels of happiness with levels of depression.

Overall, we found people aging with a disability had similar levels of happiness to people aging without a disability. We found people in older age groups tended to be a little happier than those in lower age groups. We also found that persons with lower levels of happiness were more likely to have higher levels of pain, vision loss, and falling. These results are interesting because even though persons with disabilities tend to have higher levels of depression than those without disability, their happiness levels remain about the same.

Our results suggest more research should focus on all aspects of emotional health, including happiness to better understand successful aging with a disability.



## What are the Benefits of Happiness?

- Helps control negative emotions
- Associated with better health and life expectancy
- Promotes resilience in the face of hardship
- Broadens attention and builds physical, social, and cognitive resources

## Happiness Levels by Disability Group

Figure 1. SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS SCALE (N=929)

