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# Disability

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**Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>**

## *Identifying and Definitional Attributes*

Data Dictionary: NHADD

Knowledgebase ID: 000744

Version number: 1

Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT CONCEPT

Admin status: SUPERSEDED

Effective date: 01-MAR-05

Definition: Disability is a multi-dimensional and complex concept which is defined in terms of three dimensions (WHO, 1999 and 2001): Body structures, Body function, Activity and Participation. These dimensions focus in turn on aspects of functioning and disability relevant to: the body, the individual person, and the person in society. Environmental factors interact with all dimensions of functioning and disability. All disability is associated with a current or previous health condition, disease or injury. The experience of disability may be described by the presence and nature of some or all of these three dimensions of disability associated with current or previous related health conditions. The experience of disability is variable over time and affected by external environmental factors as well as internal personal factors.

Context: Many different definitions of disability are used in Australia, both in administrative data collections and in Acts of Parliament. The consistent identification of disability in national data collections has been recommended in a number of reports, so as to enable:

- the monitoring of access to generic services by people with a disability;
- the collection of more consistent data on disability support and related services, including data on service use by different groups; and
- population data and service data to be related, thereby improving the nation's analytical capacity in relation to the need for and supply of services.

People with a disability often have a need for a variety of support services including day activity, employment, education, home care and accommodation. Defining disability will make it possible to determine the number of people who are accessing services, both disability specific and generic, and also those with a disability in the general population with unmet need. Better

definition of disability will aid better targeting of resources to those in need.

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### *Relational and Representational Attributes*

Datatype:

Collection Methods: The concept 'disability' can be made operational as a derived data element by using a combination of related data elements as building blocks.

The data elements selected may vary depending on the definition of disability used. For example in provision of housing the focus may be on the mobility dimensions and access issues and in community-based care the focus may be Participation primarily. Some applications may require a broad scope for inclusion (e.g. discrimination legislation). Data collections relating to services will select combinations of the data elements which best reflect the eligibility criteria for the service.

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### *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document: International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (2001)

Source Organisation: World Health Organisation

Comments: The data elements relating to disability are based on the ICF as endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 2001. Further information on the ICF can be found on the WHO website: [www.who.ch/icidh](http://www.who.ch/icidh)

The dimensions of functioning and disability are defined in relation to a health condition. 'A health condition is an alteration or attribute of the health state of an individual that may lead to distress, interference with daily activities, or contact with health services; it may be a disease (acute or chronic), disorder, injury or trauma, or reflect other health-related states such as pregnancy, ageing, stress, congenital anomaly or genetic predisposition' (WHO, 1999). There are a number of ways to record a health condition. An ICD-10 code may have been recorded (See National Health Data Dictionary Version 8, 1999 data elements, 'Principal diagnosis' and 'Additional diagnosis'). A diagnosis may have been reached, after assessment, of the nature and identity of the disease or condition of the person.

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### *Data Element Links*

*Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element*

*Data Agreements which include this Data Element*

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