Poster # POC-21-21

HOW DOES DISABILITY AFFECT TIME USE?

Canadian evidence for occupational justice

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In many countries throughout the world, Canada is considered a virtual paradise in terms of disability rights and programs; and yet, there is considerable evidence that disabled Canadians are not much better off than they were 30 years ago. They remain unemployed or under-employed, well below the national average in educational achievement, and well above the national average in poverty.

If disability policy has been successful in promoting equity and inclusion for people with disabilities, then we would assume that the way disabled people spend their time is converging with the way non-disabled Canadians spend their time, particularly in areas of life that are sensitive to the effects of disability, such as work, transportation and leisure.

This research examined allocations of time to 18 common activities:

- **Self-Care**: personal care, eating, sleep, waiting;
- **Productivity:** paid work, education, child care, adult care, travel, heavy housework, light housework;
- **Leisure:** civic and voluntary activity, screen time, shopping, socializing, active leisure, passive leisure

HYPOTHESIS: Between 1992 and 2010, activity patterns among disabled people have become more like those of non disabled people in Canada.

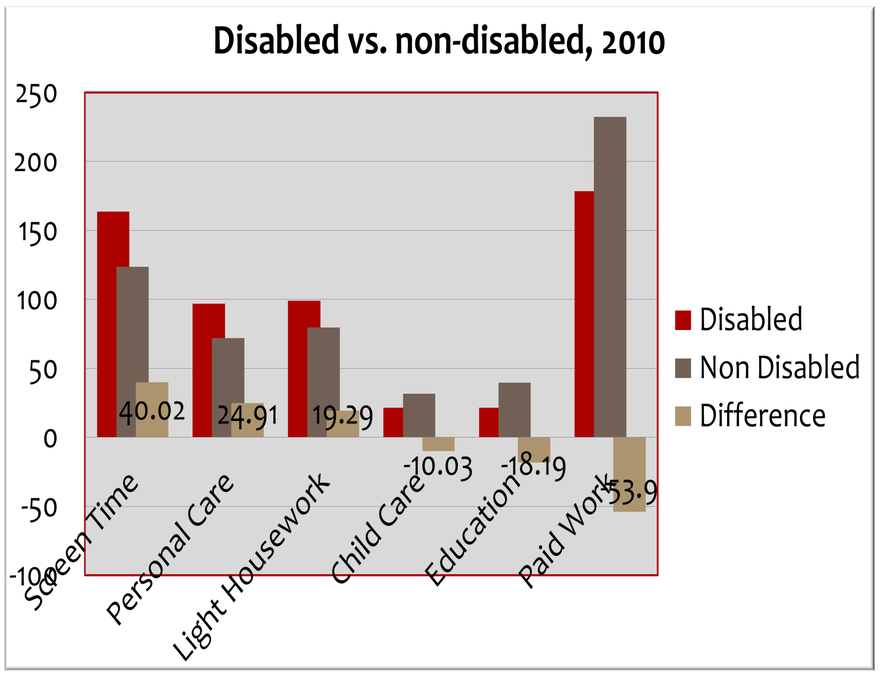
METHODS

Research Design: Descriptive exploration of time use and activity patterns among disabled and non-disabled populations over the period 1992 to 2010.

Data: Published national time use data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey were used for 1992 and 2010.

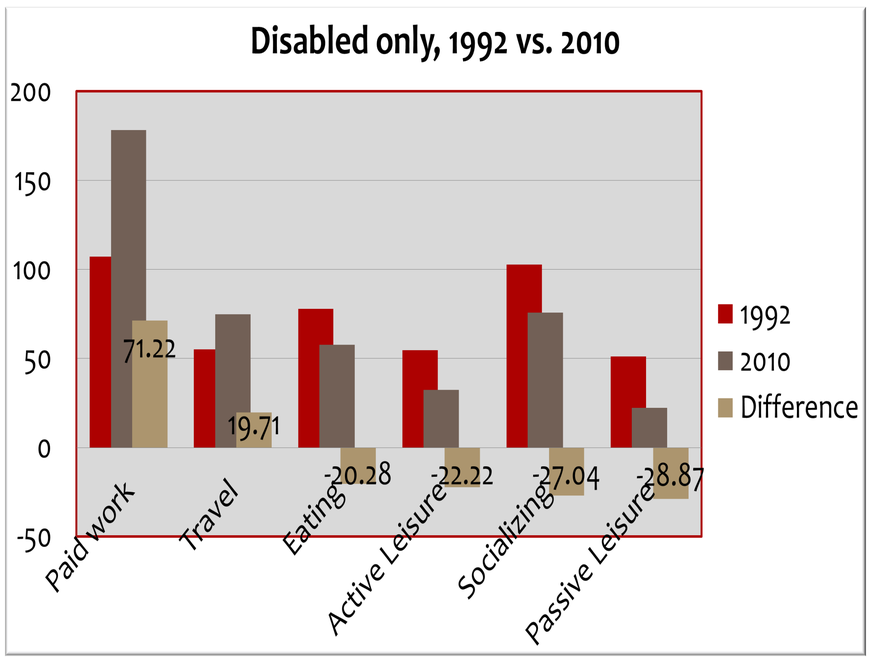
- *Time budgets* were derived from activity diaries for the 24 hours of a specified day.
- *Activity sequences* are time blocks coded to represent the event and its context throughout the day, including frequency, order, duration, and social context of activities. These data offer a much more nuanced and accurate description of individual time use (Wilson, 2006).

Sample: The total sample consists of 9,815 respondents in 1992 and 15,390 in 2010.



RESULTS

Disabled people spent significantly more time (minutes per day) than non-disabled in 2010 on screen time, personal care and light housework, and significantly less time than non disabled on child care, education and paid work.



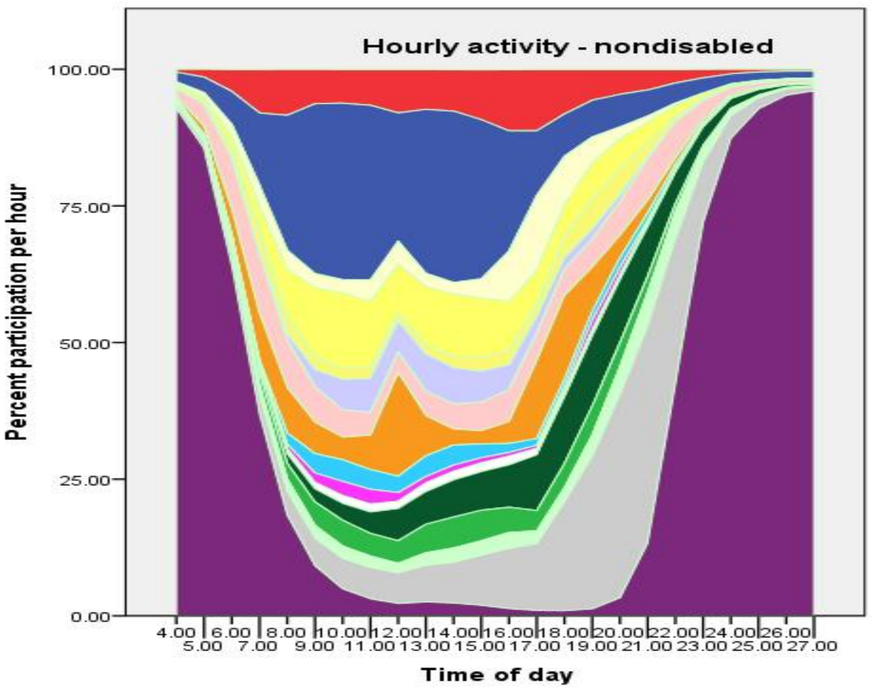
Among disabled people, there was a substantial increase from 1992 to 2010 in the amount of time spent in

- paid work (71.2 min/ day) and
- travel (19.7 min/ day).

There was a corresponding decrease in

- leisure and socialization (-78.1 min/day) and
- eating (- 20.3 min/day).

The tempogram shows the hourly distribution of the activities of interest over the 24 hour period from 4:00 am to 3:59 the next day.
Perhaps the most obvious findings are the differences in work, family care, education and screen time between disabled (top) and non-disabled (bottom).



The Dissimilarity Index compares the time budgets of different populations to show the % difference in time allocations. It responds to the question: What percentage of the day (1440 min.) would you have to re-assign to make one group's time use equivalent to the other's? In this analysis:

- The dissimilarity of disabled vs non-disabled in 1992 was 20.2%, and in 2010 it was 17.8%. Disabled and non-disabled populations are becoming less dissimilar in their time use over the study period.
- The dissimilarity between 1992 vs 2010 was 10.4% for disabled, and 7.4% for non-disabled. In other words, the disabled population had changed more over the study period than the non-disabled.

CONCLUSION

These results show that time use is significantly different between disabled and non-disabled Canadians for important activities of daily living, such as work, education, personal and family care and screen time. However, our hypothesis is upheld, in that there is evidence that time use among disabled and non-disabled Canadians is converging; that is, becoming more alike. Following the rationale outlined above, this analysis suggests that public policy may be one factor contributing to less inequity between disabled and non-disabled Canadians. It is important to note, however, that disabled people are still significantly disadvantaged in time allocated to paid work and education – two key indicators of prosperity and inclusion.

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