

# Healthy Athletes Prevalence Report 2018



The 2016-2020 Special Olympics International (SOI) Health Strategy focuses on reducing health disparities individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) face. In creating opportunities for inclusive health for all people with ID, inclusion becomes normalized in mainstream health policies, programming, services, training programs, and funding streams. **SOI has set a goal to improve access to health for 11 million persons with ID by 2020.** Data are critical in measuring progress toward this goal. SOI has been collecting

data on the health of its athletes for over twenty years. These data clearly document significant disparities that arise, at least in part, from systemic barriers to accessing equitable health. Using these data, including the unique qualitative experiences of SO Programs, SOI is working toward addressing these disparities, identifying gaps in care, and connecting athletes to follow-up care. Healthy Athletes data help quantify the magnitude of the health disparities for people with ID. Results from **100,357** of these screenings were entered into the Healthy Athletes Software (HAS) System and show that:



Healthy Athletes screening events



Health screenings



Healthcare professionals and students trained

**52%** of athletes have gait abnormalities

Older athletes were also **44%** more likely to have gait abnormalities compared to younger athletes

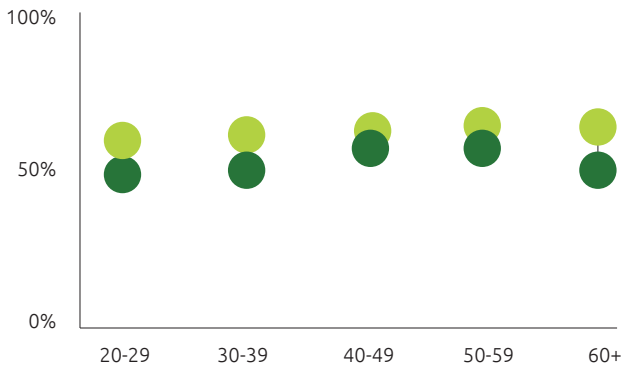
**38%** of athletes have untreated tooth decay

Athletes in Latin America were also **4X** more likely to have untreated tooth decay compared to athletes in North America

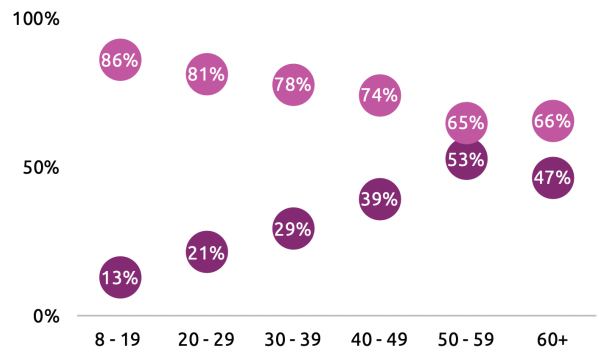
**23%** of athletes have never had an eye exam

**18%** of athletes have an eye disease and **26%** needed a new prescription

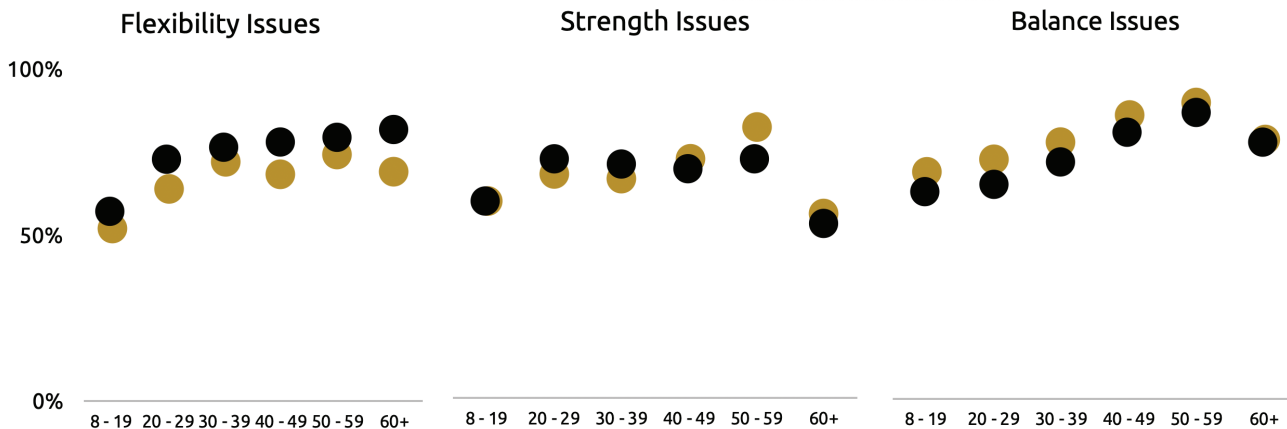
Athletes 20 and older who were **obese** were more likely to have hypertensive readings than athletes who were **not obese**.



The prevalence of athletes **who failed the pure tone hearing test** increased with age while the prevalence of those **who reported their hearing as "good"** decreased.



Across all age groups, **males** demonstrated more flexibility and strength issues compared to **females** while **females** demonstrated a higher prevalence of balance issues compared to **males**.





The prevalence rates of several health indicators are high regardless of age, gender, and region. These health issues can be **strong risk factors** for chronic health conditions that affect both functional ability and quality of life. Understanding the magnitude of these differences allows Special Olympics to address systemic barriers to achieving **equitable health for people with intellectual disabilities**. These results are an indication that the local care that is or is not received by athletes in their communities is not adequate. Special Olympics Programs can use these results to establish local partnerships or relationships with clinics to ensure athletes and the broader population of people with ID have the **same right to health** as people without ID. The table below represents all Healthy Athletes data entered into the Healthy Athletes Software (HAS) System from 2007-2018.

	Global		Africa		Asia Pacific		East Asia		Europe Eurasia		Latin America		MENA		North America	
	%	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
<b>Special Smiles Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>265,369</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24,556</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>25,659</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16,654</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>43,472</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27,274</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,122</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>123,129</b>
Mouth Pain*	14.4	36,989	24.5	5,821	17.6	4,364	9.7	1,580	10.8	4,616	22.8	5,907	21.1	424	11.7	14,231
Untreated Tooth Decay*	36.6	91,761	38.9	9,161	45.8	11,140	38.8	6,269	44.3	18,209	61.8	15,856	62.8	1,262	25.3	29,735
Missing Teeth*	27.6	69,942	15.7	3,679	19.6	4,783	16.5	2,678	39.7	16,557	26.9	6,918	32.6	663	29.0	34,526
Gingival Signs*	45.3	113,700	33.1	7,678	42.8	10,301	37.9	6,127	49.3	20,408	50.6	12,785	57.7	1,125	46.4	55,120
Urgent Dental Referral*	14.0	35,036	21.2	4,746	17.4	4,172	4.9	759	19.7	8,145	23.6	6,023	19.9	395	9.1	10,739
<b>Fit Feet Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>119,023</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5,440</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13,576</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8,378</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26,168</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,349</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1138</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>54,733</b>
Gait Abnormalities	58.1	59,231	51.1	2,575	44.0	5,039	48.5	3,628	58.2	13,422	54.1	4,641	54.1	503	65.0	29,314
Bone Deformation	25.8	25,425	18.6	873	17.4	1,913	14.9	1,117	28.0	6,510	30.8	2,632	23.8	226	28.6	12,100
Skin/Nail Conditions	54.4	58,115	52.7	2,632	51.1	5,341	47.4	3,687	66.6	16,239	62.8	5,606	54.1	563	48.8	23,324
<b>Opening Eyes Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>204,986</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>18,776</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>21,815</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13,256</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32,640</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>23,829</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,135</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>92,388</b>
Never Had an Eye Exam*	22.7	33,681	75.2	9,375	49.2	7,464	26.1	2,297	16.7	4,144	40.9	6,710	34.4	528	4.6	3,130
Eye Disease	16.1	32,632	18.2	3,408	15.8	3,438	12.4	1,647	16.4	5,339	12.7	3,032	13.0	278	16.8	15,477
Needed new Rx	35.2	72,122	15.0	2,822	22.6	4,937	20.9	2,753	33.6	10,973	29.9	7,136	21.3	454	46.5	43,000
<b>Healthy Hearing Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>119,985</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8,829</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>11,186</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7,439</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>28,105</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,616</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>58,661</b>
Permanent Hearing Loss	7.0	8,347	3.9	342	6.8	763	5.2	388	6.9	1,934	2.9	105	8.4	165	7.9	4,634
Blocked or Partially Blocked Ear Canal	39.9	47,922	37.5	3,309	36.4	4,067	40.5	3,010	39.6	11,123	34.4	1,243	43.3	851	41.3	24,251
Failed PureTone Hearing Test	24.6	29,482	20.3	1,788	24.2	2,706	16.9	1,255	22.8	6,414	14.4	520	24.6	483	27.7	16,269
Possible Middle Ear Problems*	17.1	20,538	11.5	1,015	17.4	1,951	12.1	899	19.0	5,326	12.5	453	27.0	530	17.6	10,313
<b>Health Promotion Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>159,585</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17,978</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,656</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12,120</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>31,423</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27,326</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>58,574</b>
Low Bone Density (adults)*	25.8	5,949	10.4	13	28.5	440	26.5	219	26.1	1,082	14.6	69	18.4	89	20.1	4,014
Obese (child)*	16.9	11,582	7.8	917	9.2	494	13.3	1,107	12.8	1,503	17.8	2,850	19.0	183	31.6	4,500
Overweight (child)*	14.7	10,085	8.2	970	9.3	511	14.7	1,220	13.5	1,585	19.7	3,154	17.2	165	17.2	2,455
Underweight (child)*	10.4	7,147	21.7	2,557	23.3	1,275	10.5	868	6.9	806	4.7	749	5.5	53	5.7	816
Obese (adult)*	31.9	23,476	9.2	278	14.7	523	12.3	430	24.5	4,266	15.1	1,289	19.3	204	45.4	16,444
Overweight (adult)*	28.0	20,589	13.9	421	19.9	708	11.1	387	30.0	5,224	34.0	2,911	25.4	269	28.0	10,167
Underweight (adult)*	5.0	3,689	17.3	524	15.4	548	11.1	388	4.3	749	4.7	401	7.1	75	2.7	983
Use Tobacco Products*	7.7	10,471	6.0	949	6.6	537	5.8	599	16.2	4,657	2.8	688	5.3	96	6.4	2,926
Exposure to Second Hand Smoke*	37.9	46,661	30.7	4,582	31.6	2,225	49.5	4,736	53.8	13,811	26.6	6,235	37.3	667	28.4	18,538
<b>Fun Fitness Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>117,924</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,759</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7,157</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,086</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>29,335</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,202</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>51,873</b>
Flexibility Problems Identified*	61.0	71,924	26.4	1,258	42.1	3,014	40.7	3,698	63.2	18,528	55.3	7,848	67.2	914	70.8	36,708
Strength Problems Identified*	55.4	65,355	80.5	3,832	54.4	3,892	52.3	4,752	42.7	12,537	78.5	11,154	50.4	686	54.8	28,440
Balance Problems Identified*	66.9	78,943	74.7	3,556	54.9	3,932	66.5	6,043	56.6	16,600	71.6	10,164	57.2	779	72.6	37,642
Exercise Frequency																
3 or More Days Most Weeks	53.3	53,517	33.9	1,206	41.8	2,367	58.9	4,271	42.3	11,439	40.5	5,165	58.2	445	66.1	28,539
Less Than 3 Days Most Weeks	38.3	38,441	41.2	1,465	31.6	1,788	31.9	2,316	49.6	13,417	52.2	6,645	35.8	274	29.0	12,505
No Regular Exercise Program	8.4	8,373	24.9	887	26.6	1,503	9.2	666	8.1	2,179	7.3	930	6.0	46	4.9	2,136

n = number with each health condition

\*Percentages based on number of athletes who completed particular test or answered particular question

If you would like to use Healthy Athletes data or have questions about this report, please send an email to [healthdata@specialolympics.org](mailto:healthdata@specialolympics.org)