

Demographic Information for U.S. athletes and non-athletes with intellectual disabilities

Beginning in 2011 the Special Olympics Global Collaborating Center at UMass Boston partnered with Gallup to conduct telephone surveys with over 1,000 families with an adult¹ child with intellectual disabilities (ID). To more thoroughly explore the impact of Special Olympics the study included not only family members of present and former (active and inactive) athletes but also a comparison group consisting of a random population sample of family members of adults with ID who have never participated in Special Olympics. Over a period of approximately one year, Gallup screened **351,710** households and identified **3,833** households (2.3%) which had a child over the age of 21 with intellectual disabilities. From this sample of families identified as having an adult child with ID, an in-depth survey was conducted of the families of **533** Special Olympics athletes² and **503** non-Special Olympics athletes over a period of approximately 10 months.

Through in-depth interviews, researchers gained insights into the personal characteristics of the adults with ID themselves, including functioning level, their involvement in Special Olympics, and their involvement in the community more generally, including their present living situation, the support they receive from the community, and their education and employment history.

Below are some of the preliminary findings on the demographics of participants.

¹ Adult in this study is defined as any individual age 21 or older.

² For the purposes of this report, Special Olympics athletes are defined as any adult with an intellectual disability that has participated in Special Olympics at some point in his/her life.

Table 1. Family demographics

Variable	SO Athletes N=533	Not SO Athletes N=503
Household Education Level		
n	532	502
Less than HS diploma	2.6%	6.2%
HS degree or diploma	19.2%	18.7%
Tech/vocational school	4.3%	4.8%
Some college	23.3%	22.9%
College graduate	21.8%	23.1%
Post-grad work or degree	28.8%	24.3%
Annual Household Income		
n	443	440
Less than 15K	9.0%	13.4%
15-30K	18.5%	16.6%
30-50K	24.2%	25.0%
50-75K	17.6%	18.0%
75K-100K	15.3%	11.1%
100K +	15.3%	15.9%

Table 2. Individual demographics

Variable	SO Athletes N=533	Not SO Athletes N=503
Gender		
Male	57.6%	59.4%
Female	42.4%	40.6%
Age (year)		
n	533	500
Mean (SD)	36.90 (10.30)	35.46 (11.26)
Median	36	33
Range	(21, 67)	(21,78)
Race		
n	525	496
White	86.3%	79.4%
Black	5.5%	11.7%
Asian	0.4%	1.2%
Native American	1.3%	0.6%
2 or more races	6.1%	7.1%
Other	0.4%	0%
Ethnicity		
n	530	499
Hispanic	3.6%	6.4%
Education		
n	529	499
Completed high school	74.7%	62.7%
Current Living Situation		
n	531	500
With Family	58.9%	60.0%
Group Home	25.8%	13.6%
On own	12.6%	21.0%
Other	2.6%	5.4%
Benefits received		
n	524	492
SSI/SSDI benefits	83.2%	68.7%

Table 3. Other individual characteristics

Variable	SO Athletes N=533	Not SO Athletes N=503
Current Physical Health		
n	532	500
Poor	8.8%	15.8%
Fair	21.2%	29.0%
Good	42.1%	38.2%
Excellent	27.8%	17.0%
Co-morbidity		
n	533	503
Autism	16.5%	17.1%
Behavioral disorder	26.1%	41.6%
Emotional disturbance	15.2%	26.6%
Learning disability	84.6%	85.1%
Other	71.7%	68.4%
Total	98.3%	99.6%
Behavioral Problems		
Without Behavioral Disorder n	394	292
Without Behavioral Disorder	22.8%	26.0%
With Behavioral Disorder n	533	501
With Behavioral Disorder	43.0%	56.9%