

## Understanding the Consequences of Access Barriers to Health Care: Experiences of Adults with Disabilities

**Purpose:** The study explores: (1) the scope and nature of the consequences that adults with disabilities perceive as the result of inappropriate access to health care services; (2) the variability of these consequences by demographic attributes such as disability type, gender, and health insurance type; and (3) the inter-relatedness and multidimensionality of these consequences.

**Methods:** Qualitative, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were administered over the telephone to 30 participants with spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, or multiple sclerosis as part of a nation-wide study on access and utilisation in the USA. Interviews were transcribed and coded for analysis using the qualitative analysis program, NVivo.

**Results:** Consequences were grouped into one of five categories: social, psychological, physical, economic and independence issues. Responses differed slightly with regard to disability type, gender and health insurance type. There was substantial overlap among consequence categories. For most respondents, negative consequences were not limited to just one area – frequently, once consequence triggered others.

**Conclusions:** Health insurers and providers need a better understanding of the multiple consequences of access barriers. Based on this knowledge, detrimental and costly effects of inappropriate service delivery could be more effectively prevented. Implications for health care services and policy are discussed.

[Disability and Rehabilitation](#)