



# Sexual Health Behaviors among High School Students with Disabilities

---

Willi Horner-Johnson, Cesar Higgins Tejera,  
Margaret Braun

# Acknowledgements

- This presentation was supported by Cooperative Agreement #NU27DD000014 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and by the Oregon Health Authority Office of Equity and Inclusion. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC or OHA.

# Background

- Sexuality of people with disabilities has historically been repressed or ignored
- Oregon youth with developmental disabilities have reported substantial unmet needs for sexual health information
- Very little is known about sexual behaviors among youth with disabilities
- Information about current practices and risk behaviors is key to informing education and sexual health promotion efforts

# Objectives

- Describe sexual activity and sexual risk behaviors of youth with disabilities in Oregon
- Compare sexual activity and sexual risk behaviors of Oregon youth with and without disabilities

# Data Source

- Oregon Healthy Teens survey
  - Monitors health and well-being of adolescents
  - Administered in alternate years through schools to 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders statewide
  - Anonymous and voluntary
- 2015 and 2017 surveys included six disability identifiers in the survey for 11<sup>th</sup> graders

# Disability Questions

1. Are you deaf or do you have serious difficulty hearing?
2. Are you blind or do you have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?
3. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?

# Disability Questions

4. Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
5. Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing?
6. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a physician's office or shopping?

# Sexual Behaviors

- Ever had intercourse
- Age at which first had intercourse
- Number of sexual partners in last 3 months
- Used alcohol at last intercourse
- Used condom at last intercourse



# Analyses

- Survey weighted analyses using Stata 15
- Cross tabulations of proportions, with chi-square tests
- Multivariable logistic regression analyses controlling for:
  - Gender
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Sexual Orientation
  - SES (measured by Family Affluence Scale)

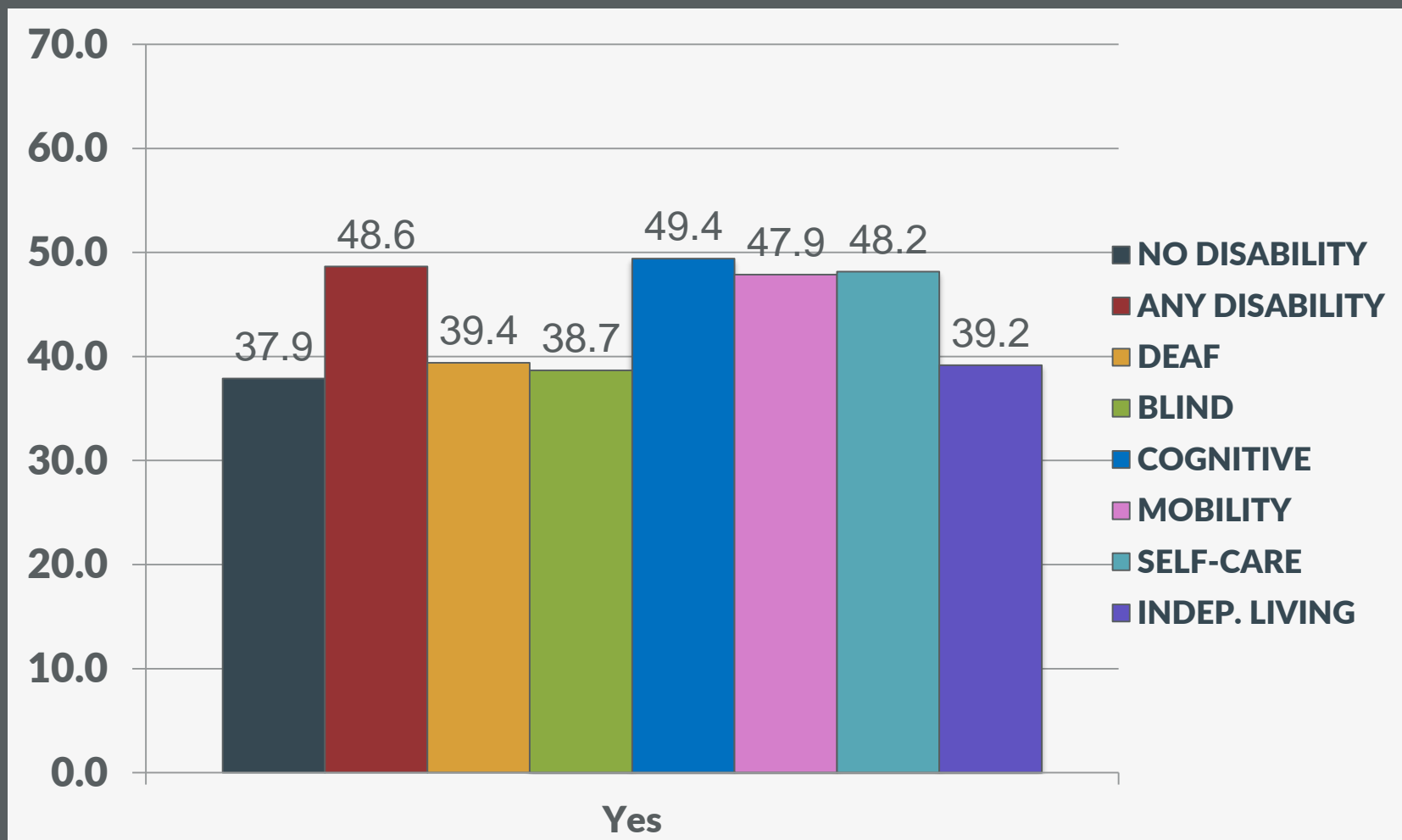
# Disability Prevalence

- Any disability: 29.7%
  - Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing: 2.2%
  - Blind/Low Vision: 4.9%
  - Cognitive: 22.5%
  - Mobility: 2.6%
  - Self-care: 0.9%
  - Independent Living: 7.9%

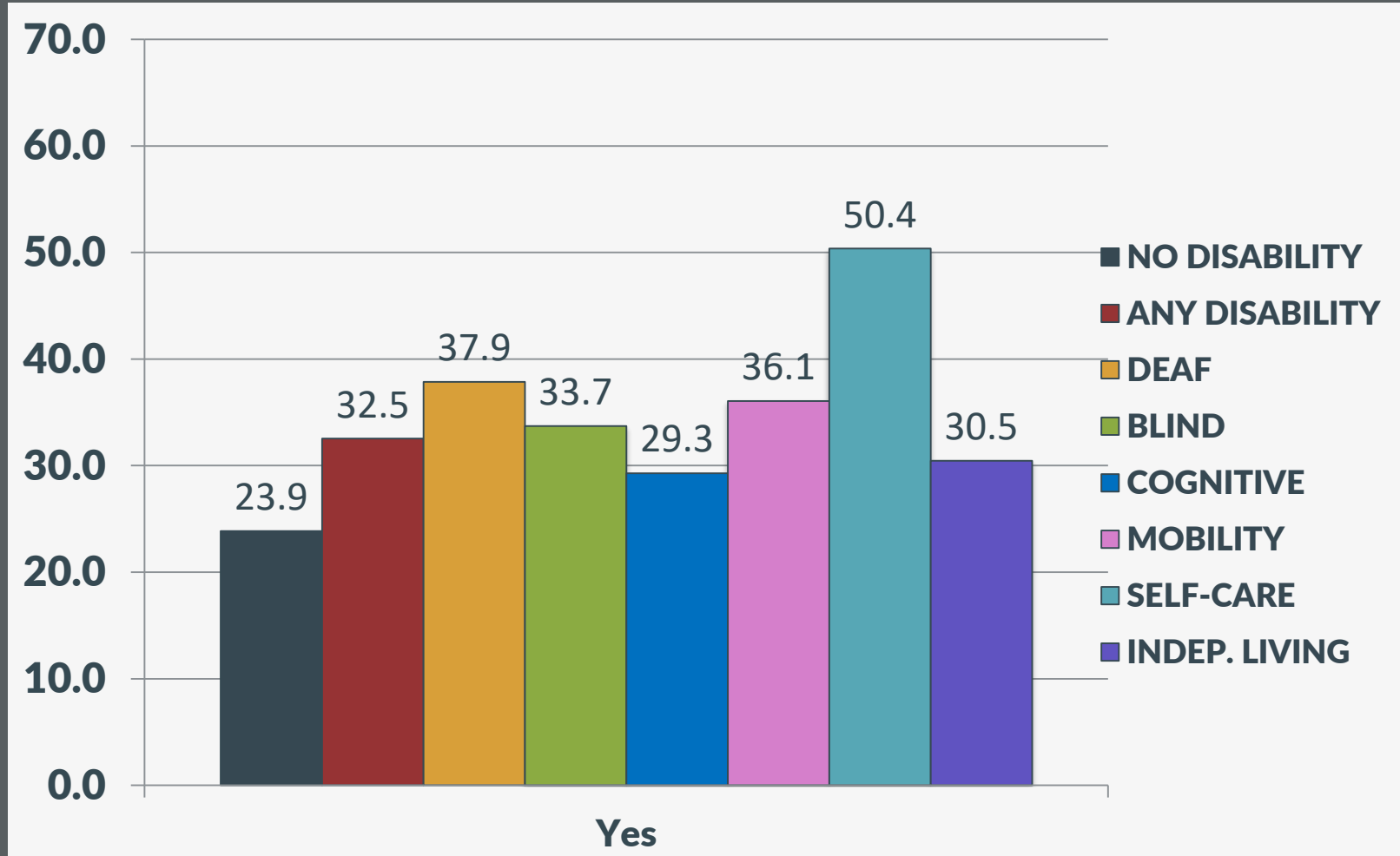
# Demographic Characteristics

	Disability	No Disability
Female	59.6%	45.4%
LGB	22.6%	7.0%
White, non-Hispanic	60.5%	64.5%
Black/African American, non-Hispanic	2.5%	2.0%
Asian, non-Hispanic	3.2%	3.9%
Hispanic	27.8%	23.1%
Other, non-Hispanic	6.1%	6.4%
Low family affluence	13.3%	8.8%

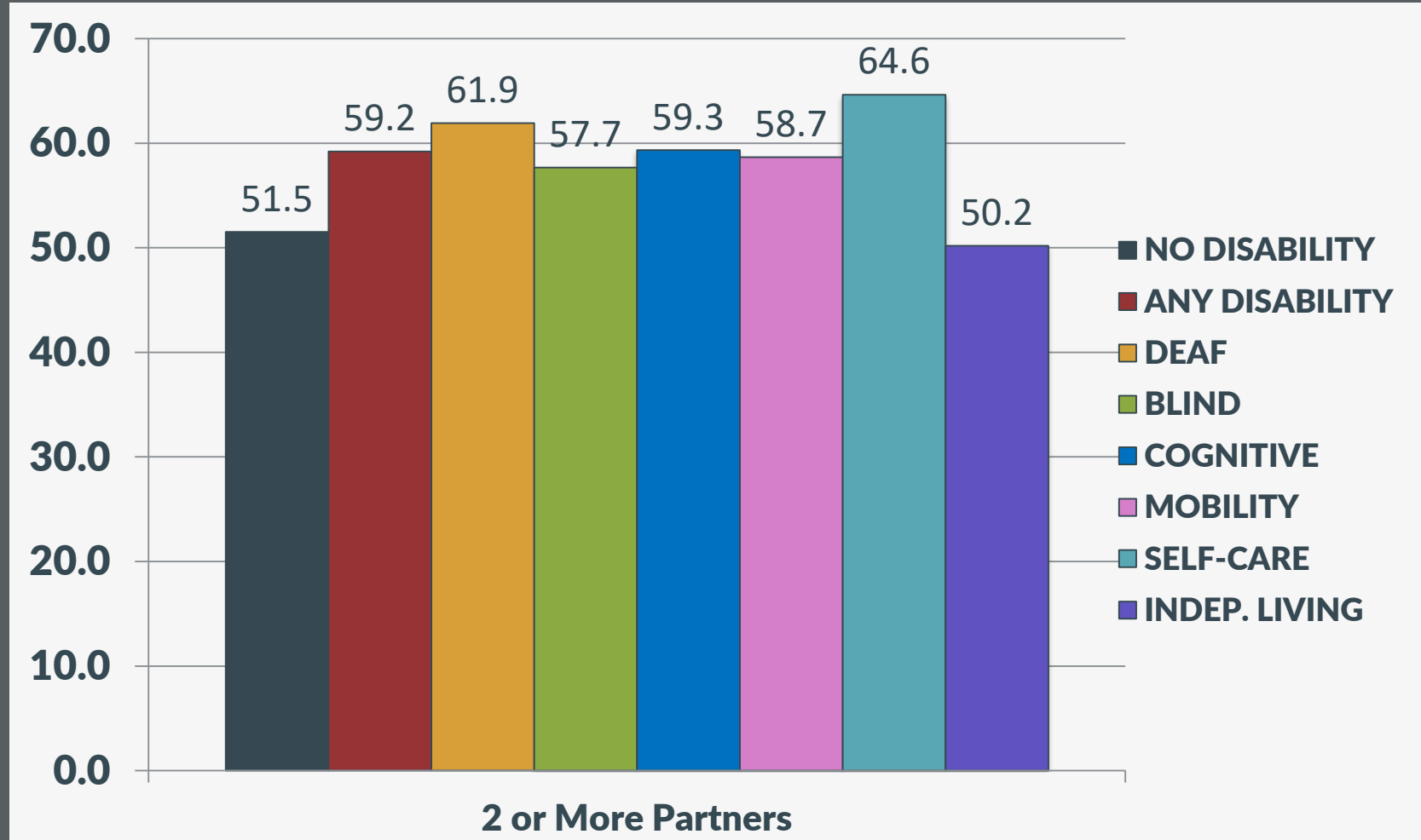
# Ever Had Intercourse



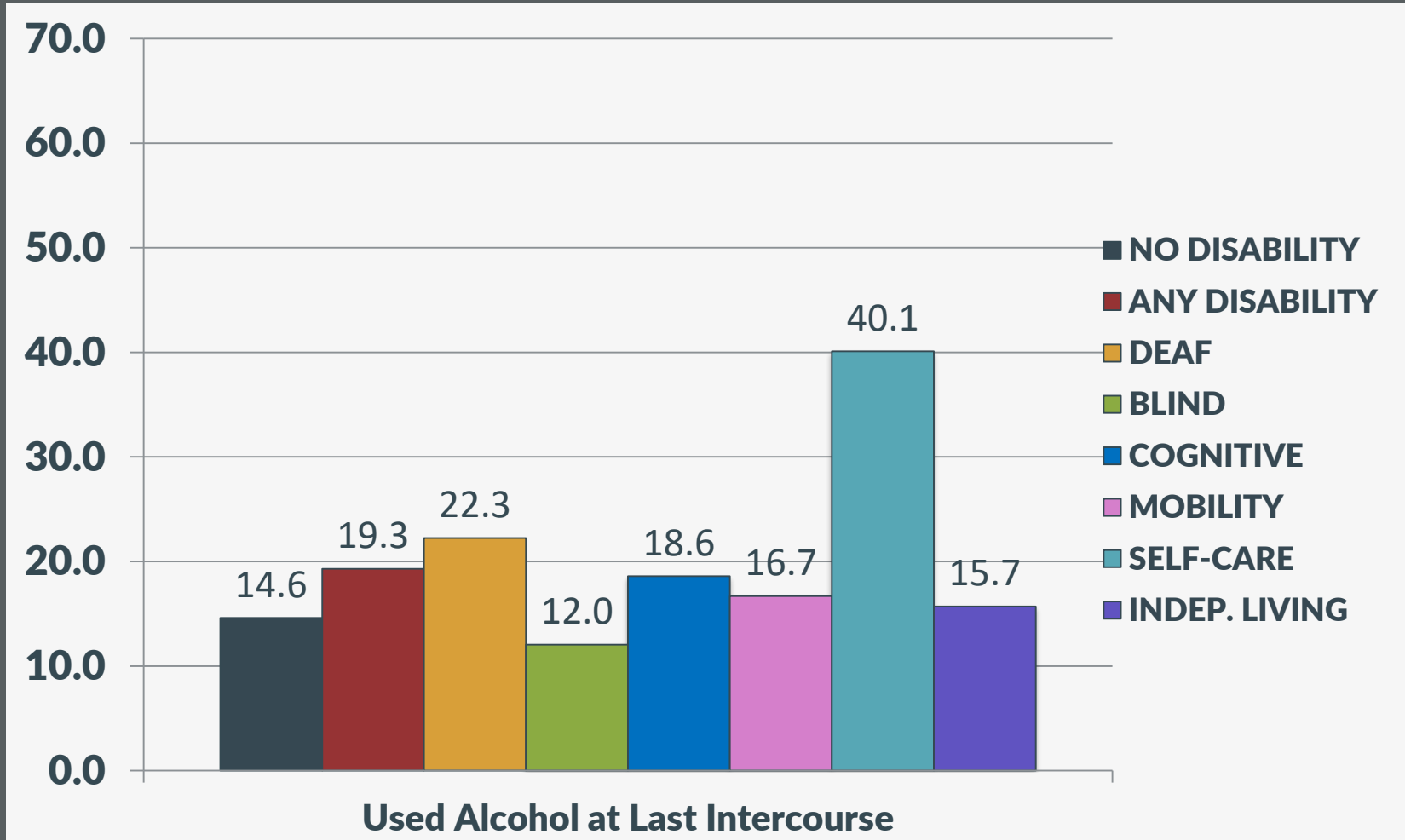
# Intercourse Before Age 15



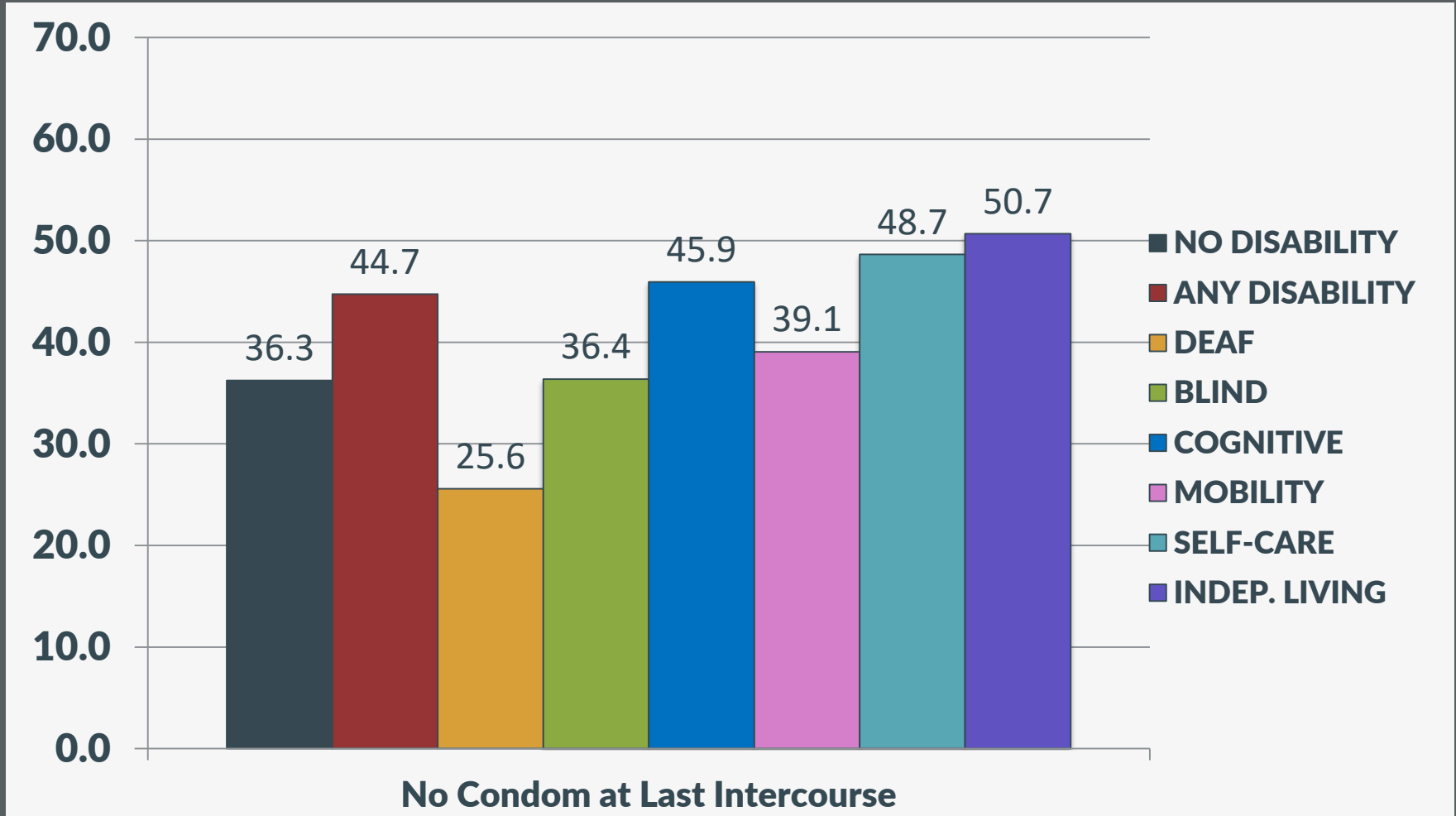
# Partners in Last 3 Months



# Alcohol Use at Last Intercourse



# Condom Use at Last Intercourse





# Behaviors Stratified by Gender

Behavior	Female		Male	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Intercourse	49.3%	37.3%	48.0%	38.3%
Intercourse before age 15	30.3%	20.9%	35.3%	26.0%
≥2 partners in last 3 mo.	57.4%	49.9%	62.5%	52.45%
Alcohol with intercourse	19.5%	13.9%	19.5%	15.2%
Condomless intercourse	47.3%	39.6%	40.3%	32.9%

# Stratified by Sexual Orientation

Behavior	Straight		LGB	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Intercourse	47.6%	37.9%	55.6%	43.9%
Intercourse before age 15	29.9%	22.8%	40.1%	33.1%
≥2 partners in last 3 mo.	55.3%	50.7%	67.2%	59.7%
Alcohol with intercourse	18.0%	14.1%	23.2%	20.3%
Condomless intercourse	42.6%	35.2%	51.7%	47.1%

# Stratified by Race/Ethnicity

Behavior	White, Non-Hispanic		Other Race/Ethnicity	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Intercourse	49.7%	37.9%	46.2%	37.6%
Intercourse before age 15	29.8%	19.6%	34.2%	23.6%
≥2 partners in last 3 mo.	57.5%	49.5%	59.9%	53.6%
Alcohol with intercourse	18.1%	13.7%	19.3%	14.3%
Condomless intercourse	45.9%	37.3%	47.4%	37.1%

# Stratified by SES

Behavior	Low		Medium		High	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Intercourse	51.3%	43.3%	49.5%	40.6%	46.7%	35.2%
Intercourse before age 15	39.1%	32.1%	33.0%	25.5%	29.0%	20.0%
≥2 partners in last 3 mo.	65.7%	53.8%	57.2%	53.3%	58.3%	48.7%
Alcohol with intercourse	22.3%	16.2%	17.8%	16.0%	18.8%	12.7%
Condomless intercourse	45.2%	41.5%	45.7%	38.4%	43.6%	33.5%

# Adjusted Odds of Behaviors

- Intercourse ever: OR=1.45, 95% CI=1.27-1.65
- Early intercourse: OR=1.70, 95% CI=1.36-2.13
- Multiple partners: OR=1.31, 95% CI=1.09-1.56
- Alcohol at last intercourse:  
OR=1.36, 95% CI=1.01-1.83
- Condomless intercourse:  
OR=1.34, 95% CI=1.08-1.66

# Limitations

- Data collection may have excluded some youth with disabilities
  - Survey typically not administered in special education classes
  - No routine provision of accommodations
- No data on duration of disability. Some cognitive challenges could be precipitated by sexual abuse early in life.
- Limited power for examining differences by type of disability

# Conclusions

- Youth with disabilities are having sex
- Youth with disabilities had significantly elevated odds of engaging in every sexual health risk behavior examined
- Clear need for risk reduction and sexual health promotion efforts targeting youth with disabilities



Thank You