

Disability and the Differential Impact by Age and Sex on Work: A Portrait of Older Persons Working with a Disability

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Background

What is a Disability?

- Disability, as defined by the Americans with Disability Act, is an individual's physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities for that individual (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009).
- Health problems that may lead to disability in older age:
 - Age-related hearing loss (hearing loss)
 - Macular degeneration (vision loss)
 - Dementia (cognitive impairment)
 - Arthritis (physical limitations)

Longevity, Disability, and Work

- Life expectancy at birth increased from 47.3 years in 1900 to 78.8 years in 2012.
- Understanding the older working population is increasingly relevant with the aging of the baby boom generation who started turning 65 in 2011.
- As people age they are more likely to have a disability.
 - 36.3 percent of people 65 and over have a disability
(2010-2014 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau)

Longevity, Disability, and Work

- Age when people can start claiming Social Security retirement benefits (62-70) and Medicare (65) may impact when people retire.
 - Eligibility for partial Social Security retirement benefits begins at age 62.
 - Benefits increase the later people start claiming Social Security, up until age 70, when benefits are maxed out.
- While many retire in their early 60's, others still work, including people with disabilities.

Prior research on workers with disabilities

- Workers under 65 with disabilities are overrepresented in entry-level positions with lower earnings, jobs that are more physically demanding, and lower skilled jobs (Kaye, 2009).
- People with cognitive impairments and mobility limitations had lower lifetime earnings than people with other disabilities (Gibson, 2015).
- There are few studies on how type of disability relates to what kind of work older people do.

Research Question

What are the occupational outcomes for older workers by the number and type of disability?

Data and Methods

- Restricted full microdata file from 5-year 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS) sample
- Universe – population 62 and over
- Descriptive study on work characteristics of older workers with disabilities by age, sex, and type of disability

Work Variables

- Labor Force Participation (LFP) rate
 - = Total in labor force/ Total population
 - Labor force -- employed or looking for work excluding workers who stopped looking for work.
- Occupation
 - 24 occupations
 - 23 major occupation groups according to the Standard Occupational Classification Manual
 - 1 occupation group, “Mail carriers, couriers, meter readers, shipping, and stock clerks”, split out from major group “Office and Administrative Support Occupations” as they involve more physical ability.

Demographic Variables

- Detailed age groups:

Age	Social Security eligibility	Eligible for Medicare
62-64	Partial retirement benefits	No
65-66	Partial retirement benefits	Yes
67-69	Full retirement benefits	Yes
70+	Maximum retirement benefits	Yes

- Sex

ACS Questions on Disability

17 a. Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?

Yes
 No

b. Is this person blind or does he/she have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?

Yes
 No

18 a. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?

Yes
 No

b. Does this person have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?

Yes
 No

c. Does this person have difficulty dressing or bathing?

Yes
 No

19 Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?

Yes
 No

■ Number of Disabilities

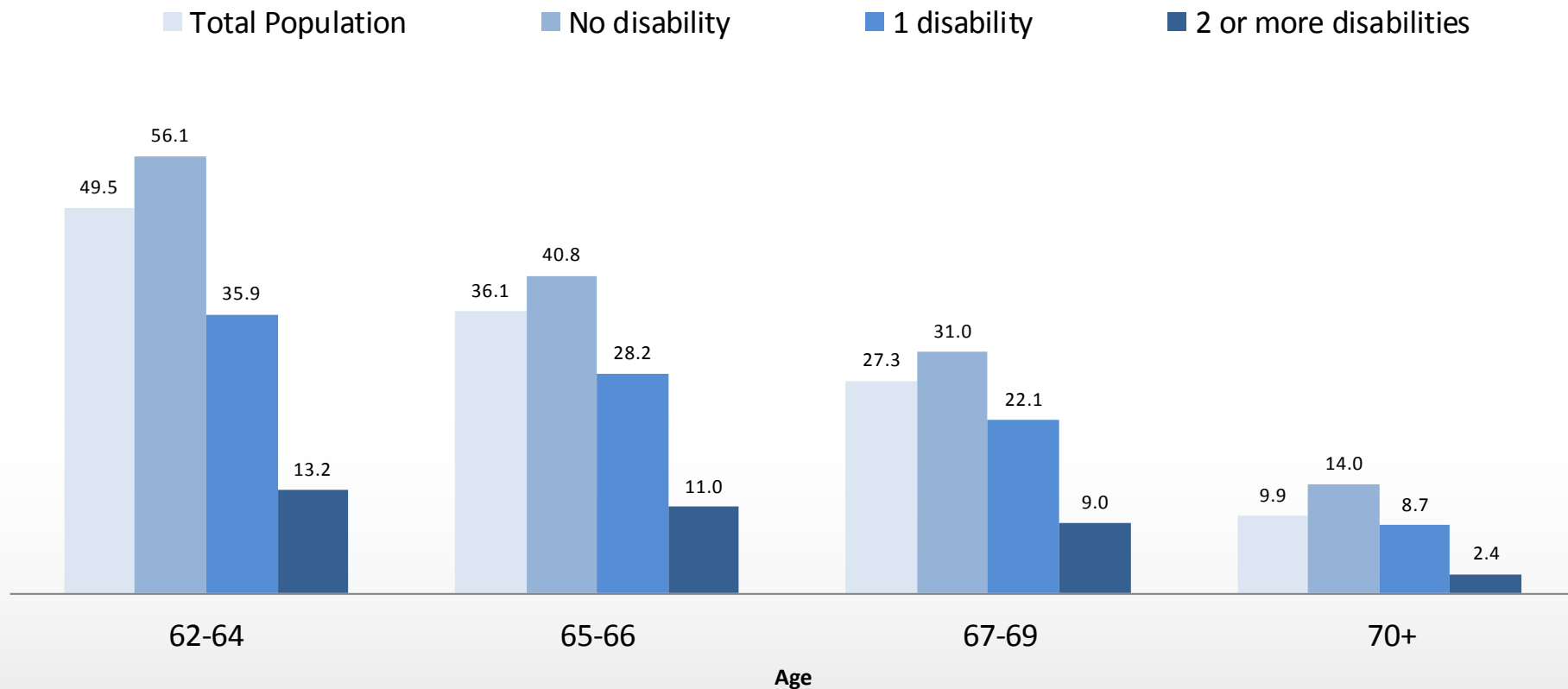
- None
- 1 (any of the 6 disabilities in the ACS)
- 2+ (2 or more of the 6 disabilities in the ACS)

■ Type of Disability

- Hearing loss
- Cognitive impairment
- Ambulatory difficulty

Preliminary Results

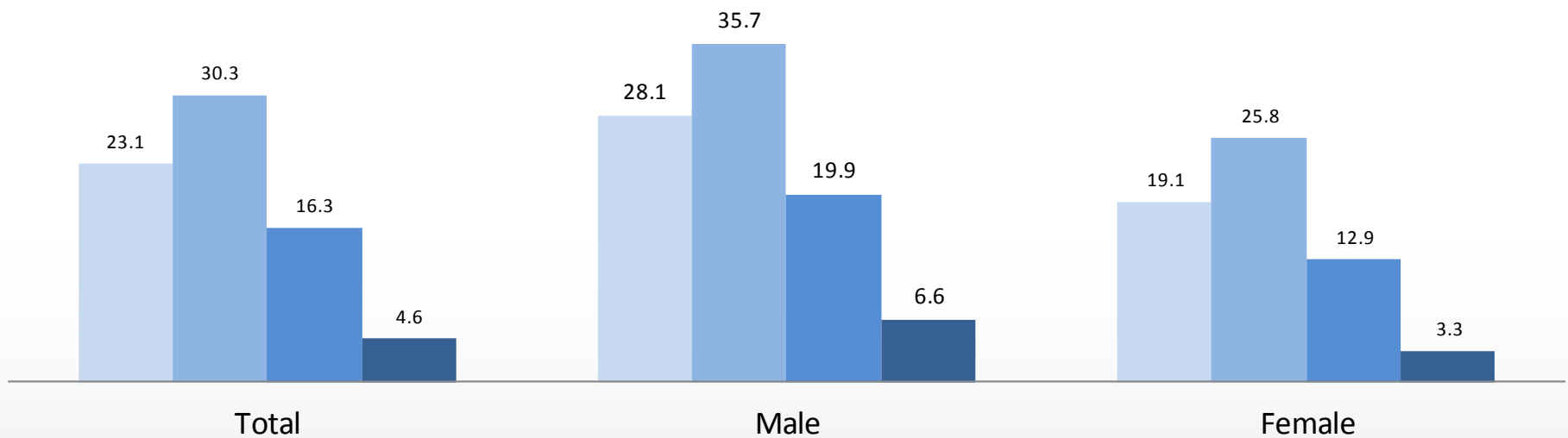
Labor Force Participation Rate for the Civilian Population 62+ by Age and Number of Disabilities: 2010-2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

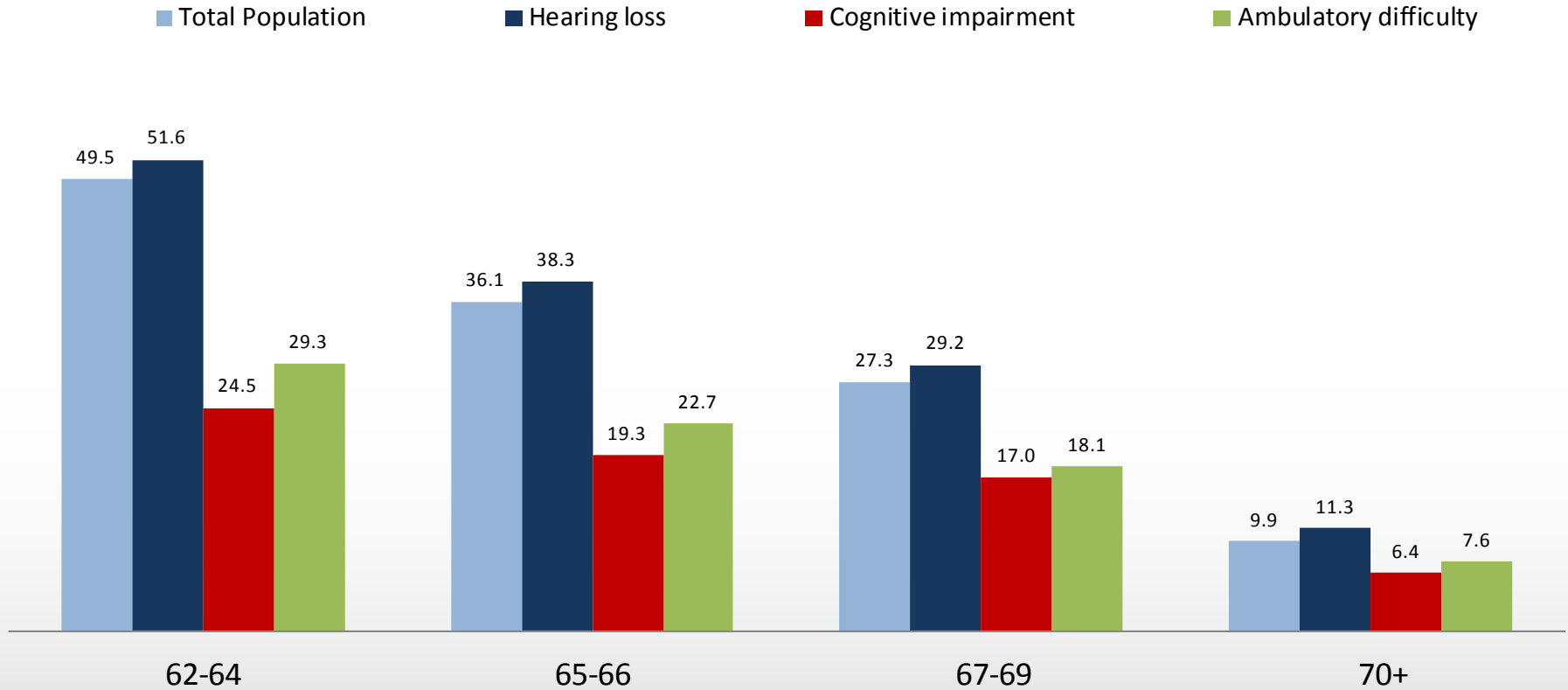
Labor Force Participation Rate for the Civilian Population 62+ by Sex: 2010-2014

■ Total Population ■ No disability ■ 1 disability ■ 2 or more disabilities



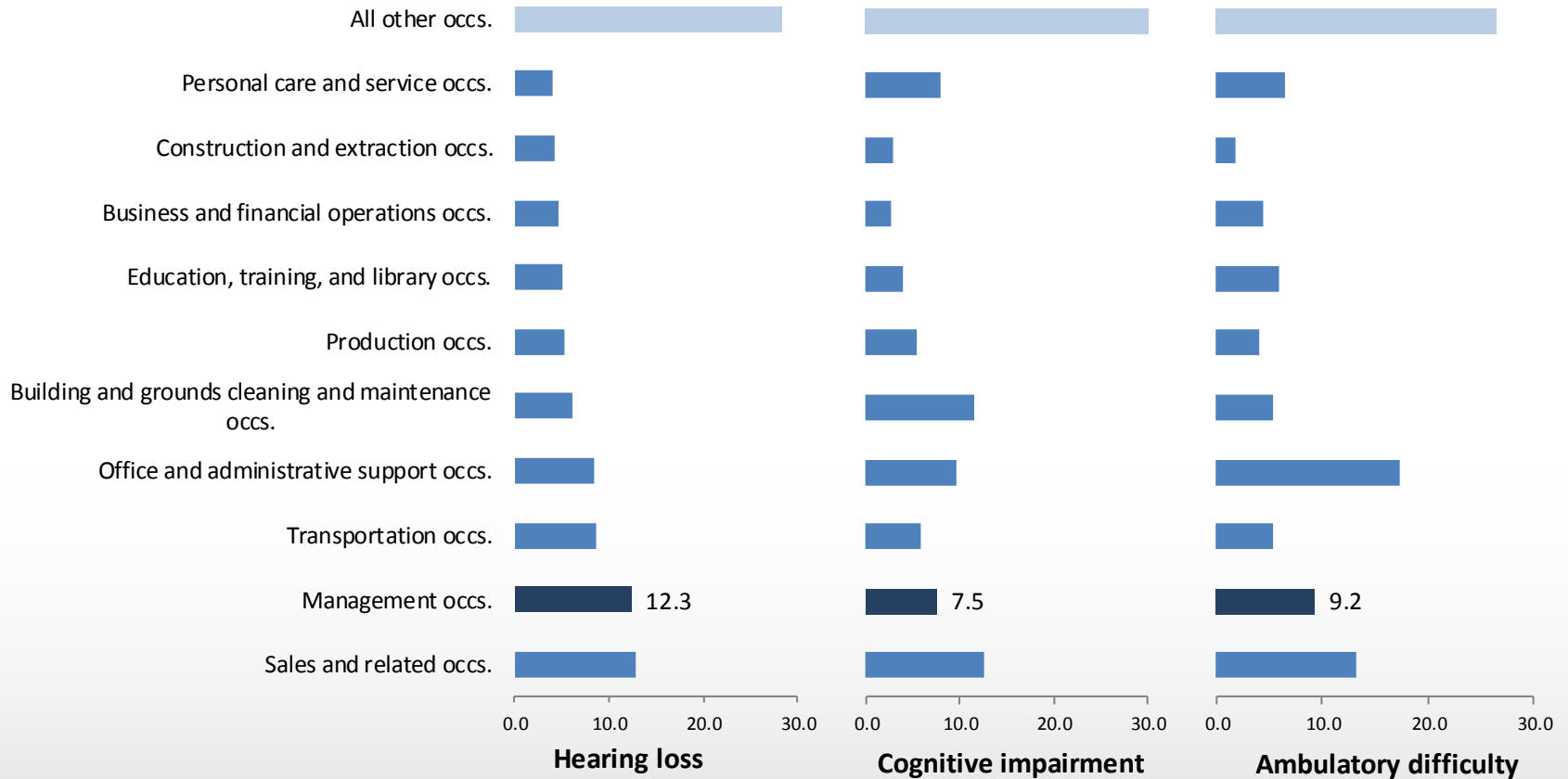
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Labor Force Participation by Type of Disability for the Civilian Population 62 and Over: 2010-2014



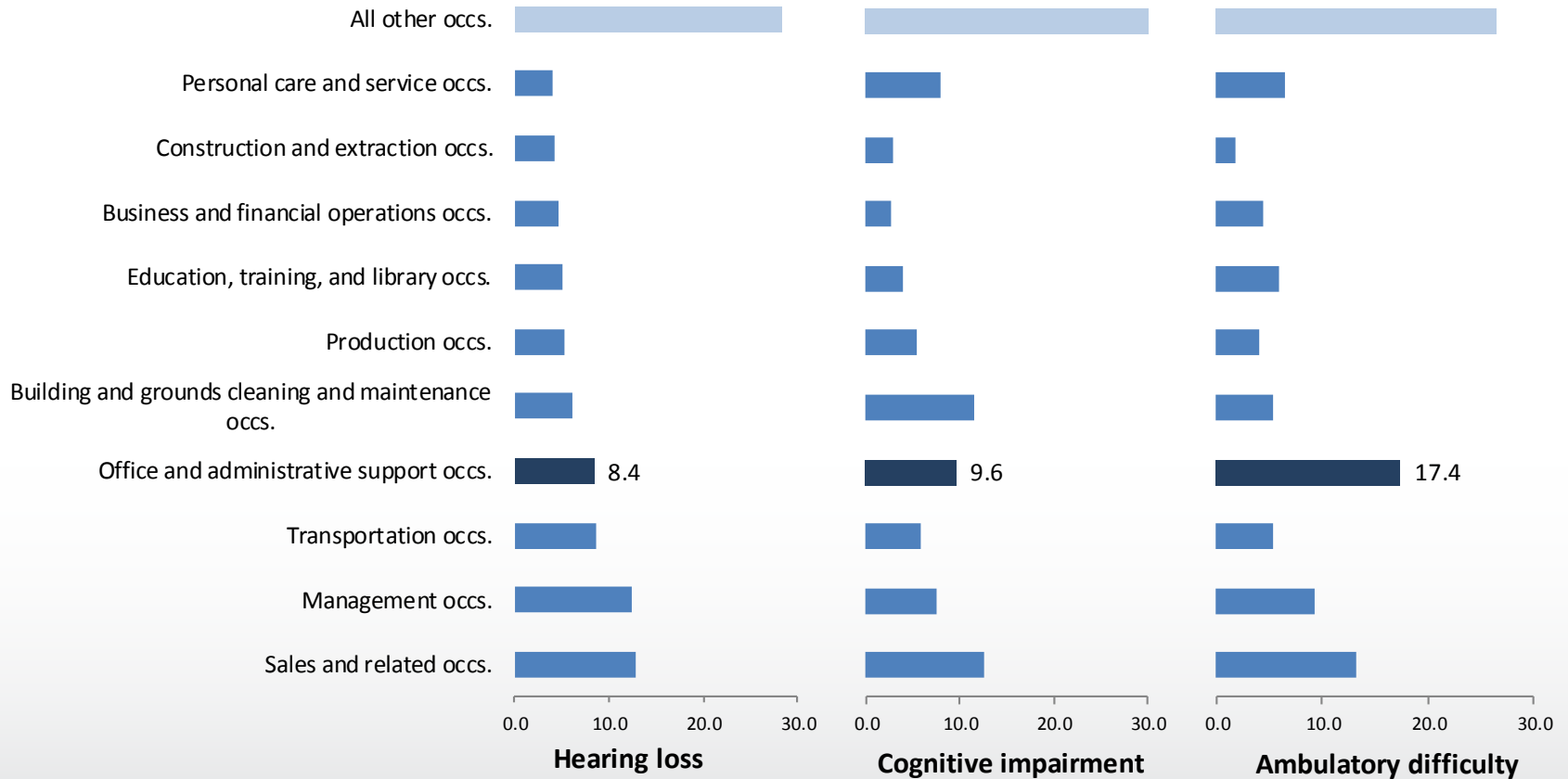
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Type of Disability for the Civilian Employed Population 65 and Over: 2010-2014



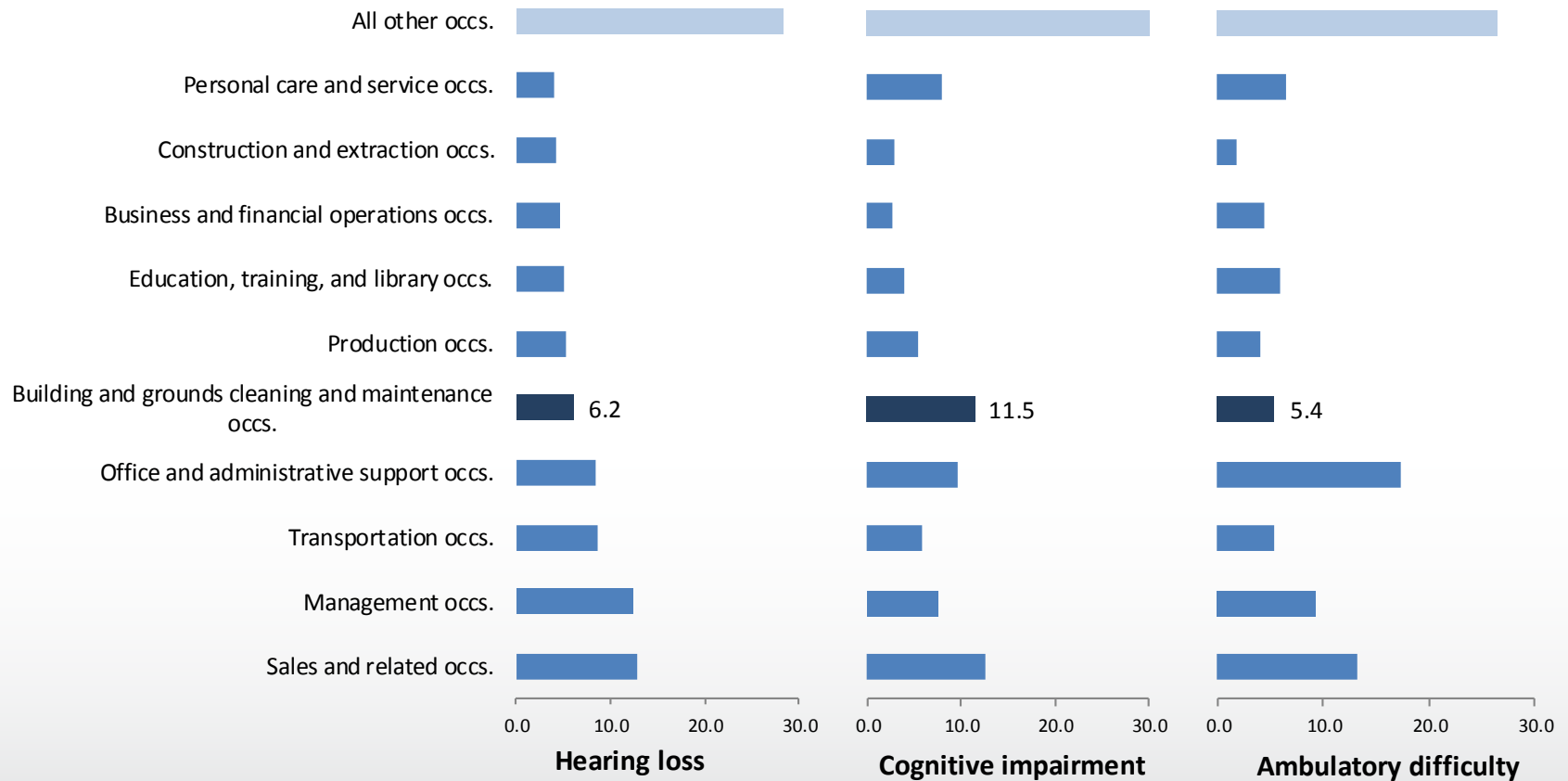
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Type of Disability for the Civilian Employed Population 65 and Over: 2010-2014



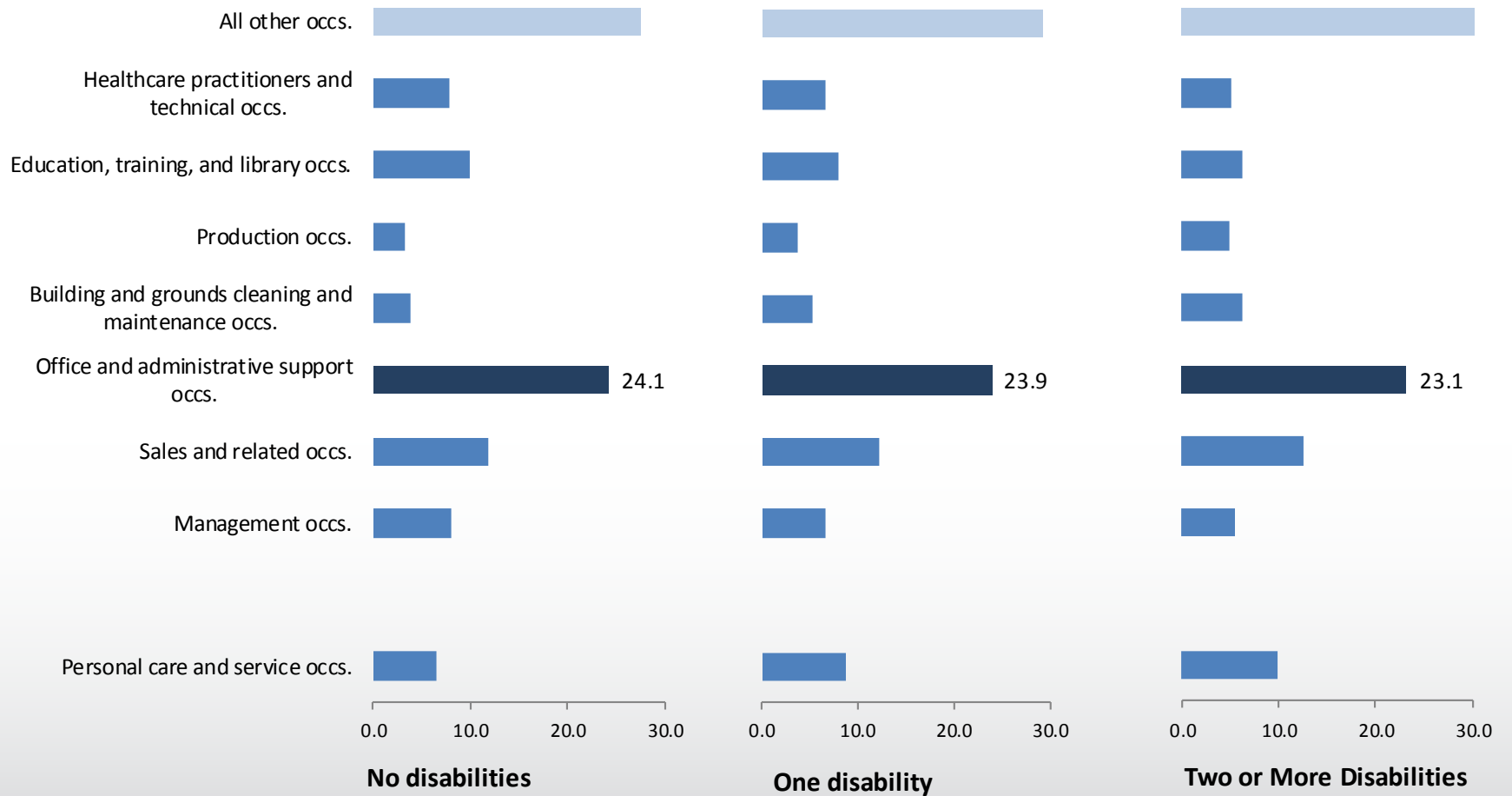
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Type of Disability for the Civilian Employed Population 65 and Over: 2010-2014



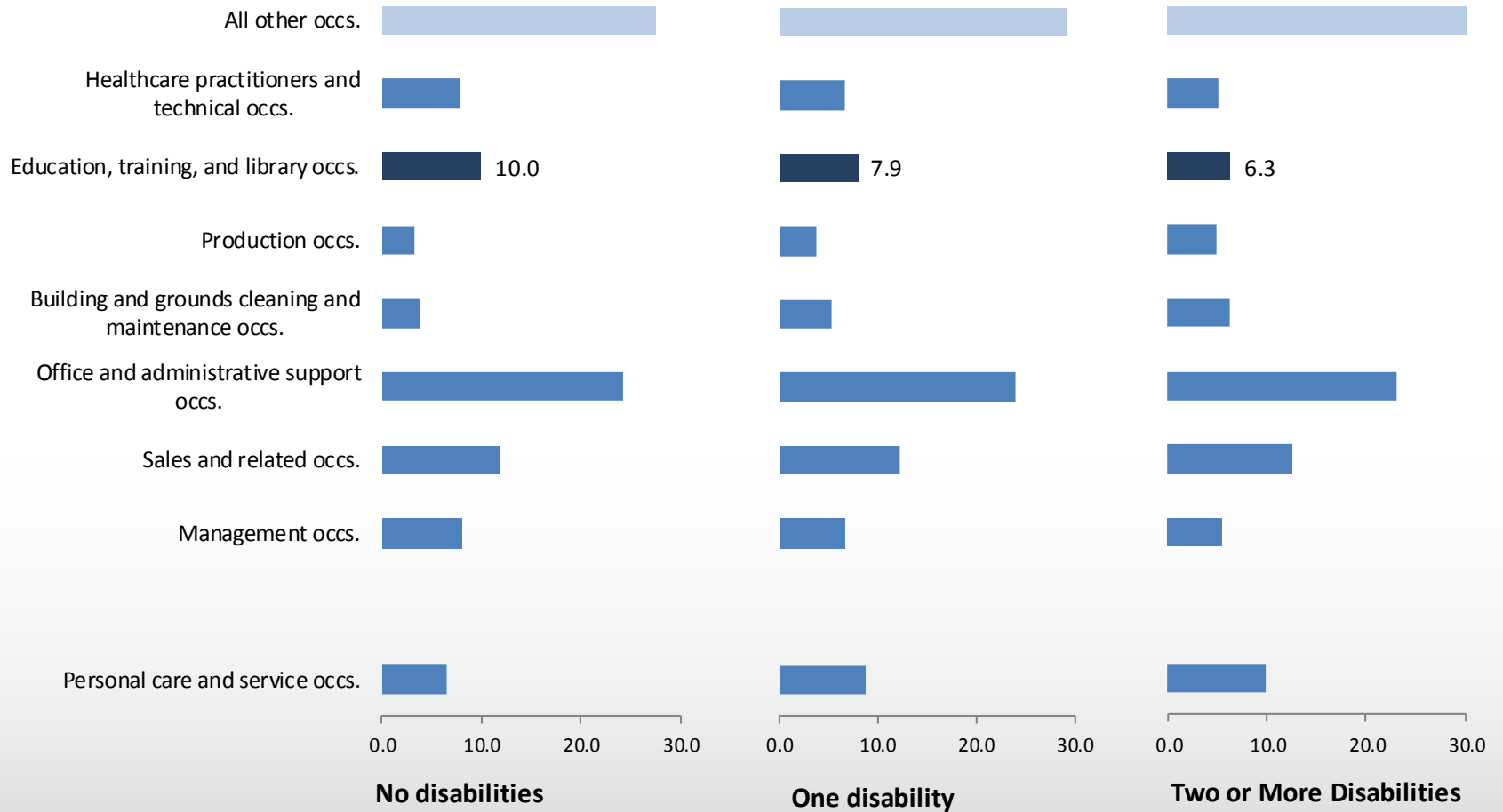
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Number of Disabilities for Civilian Employed Females 62 and Over: 2010-2014



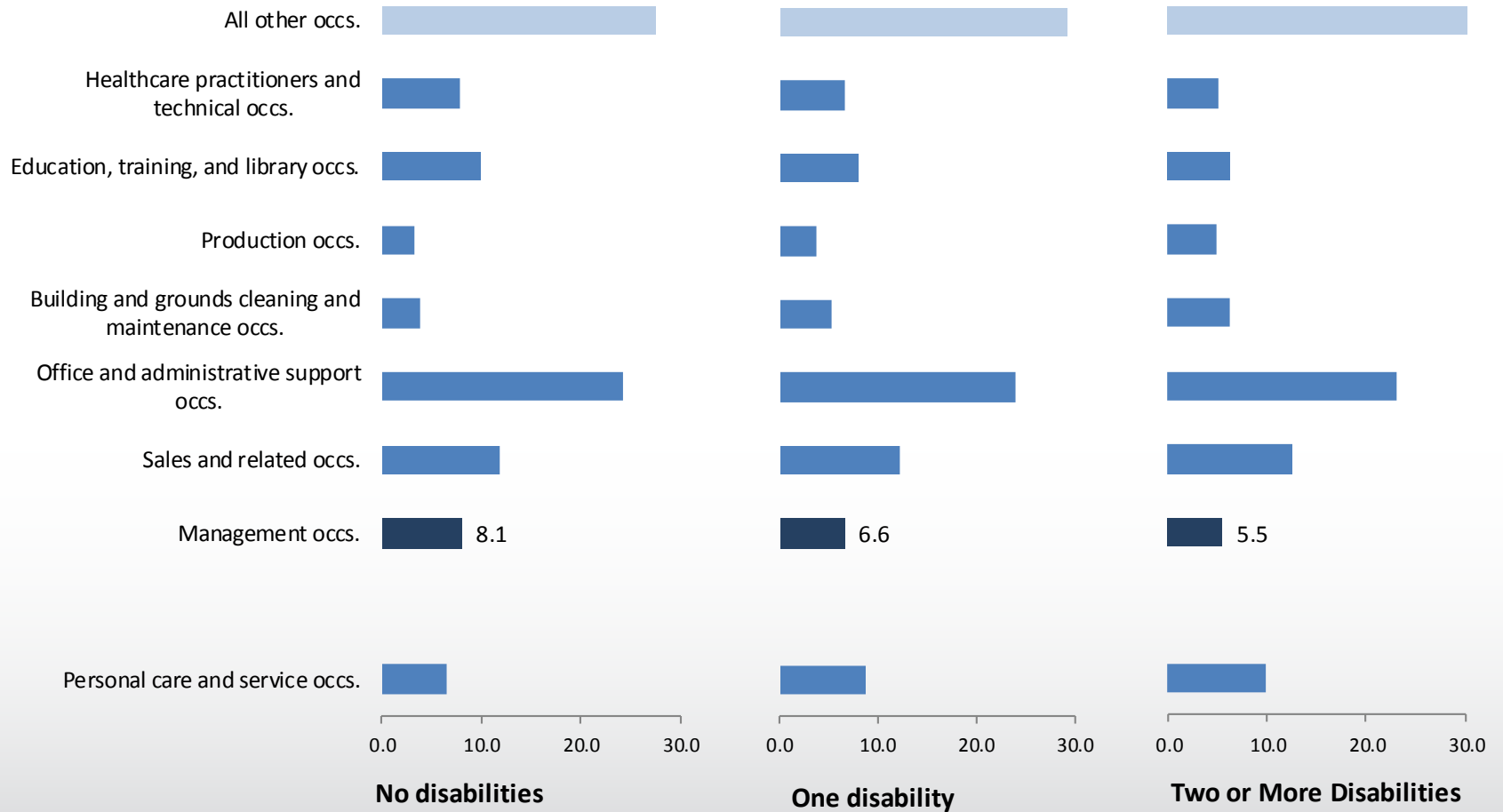
Note: The “No disability” value of 24.1% and “One disability” value of 23.9% are not statistically different.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Number of Disabilities for Civilian Employed Females 62 and Over: 2010-2014



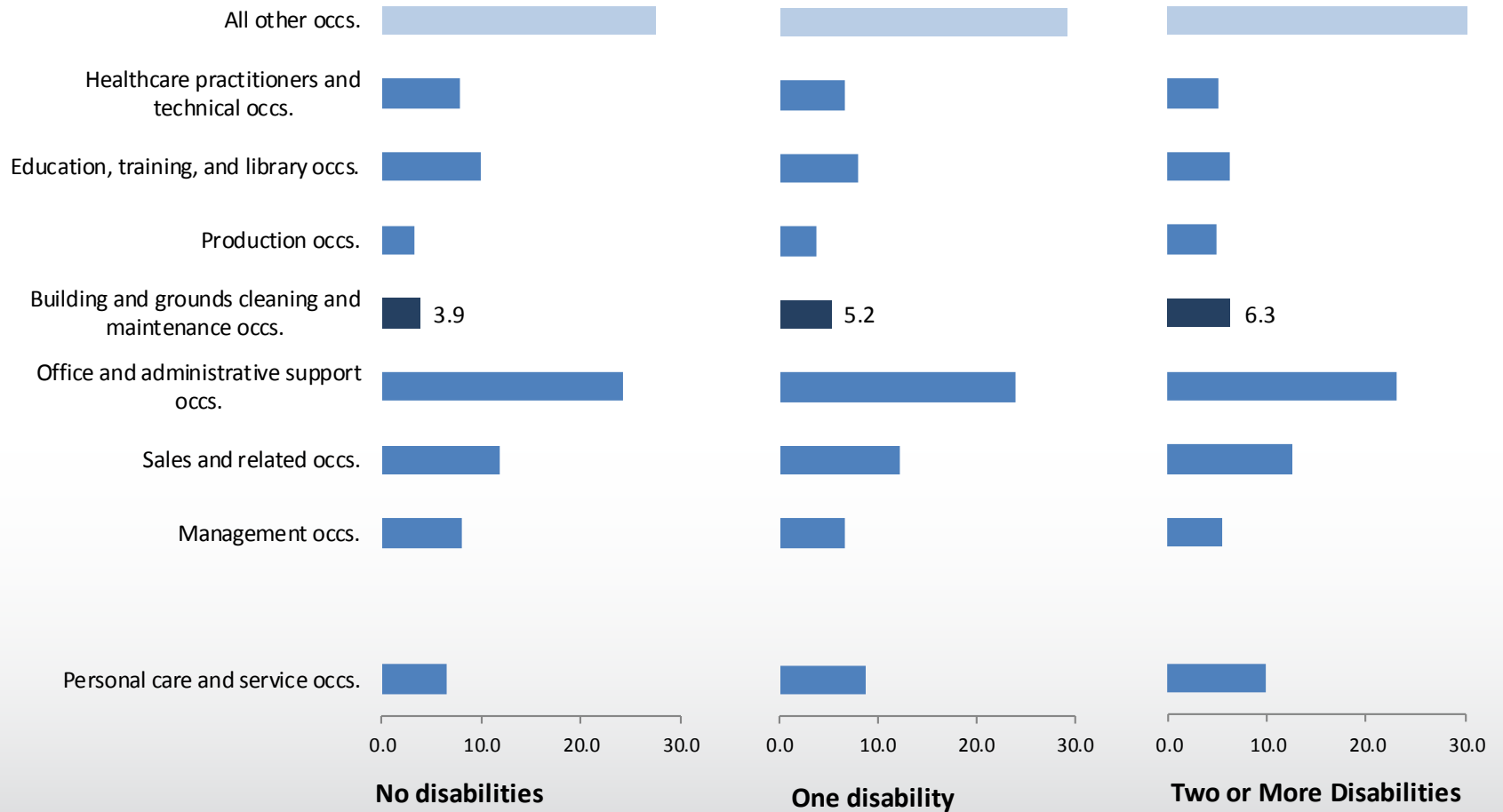
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Number of Disabilities for Civilian Employed Females 62 and Over: 2010-2014



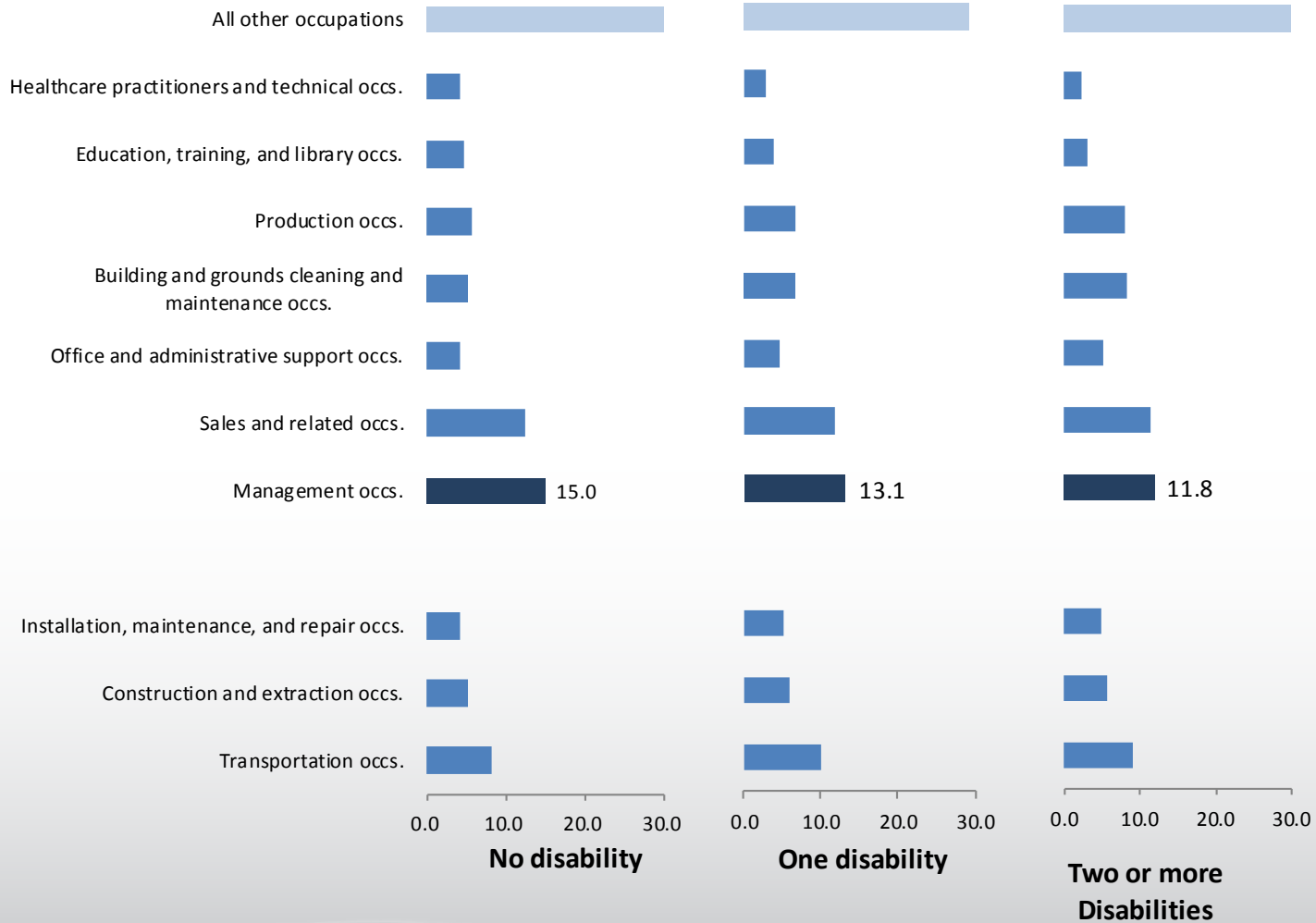
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Number of Disabilities for Civilian Employed Females 62 and Over: 2010-2014



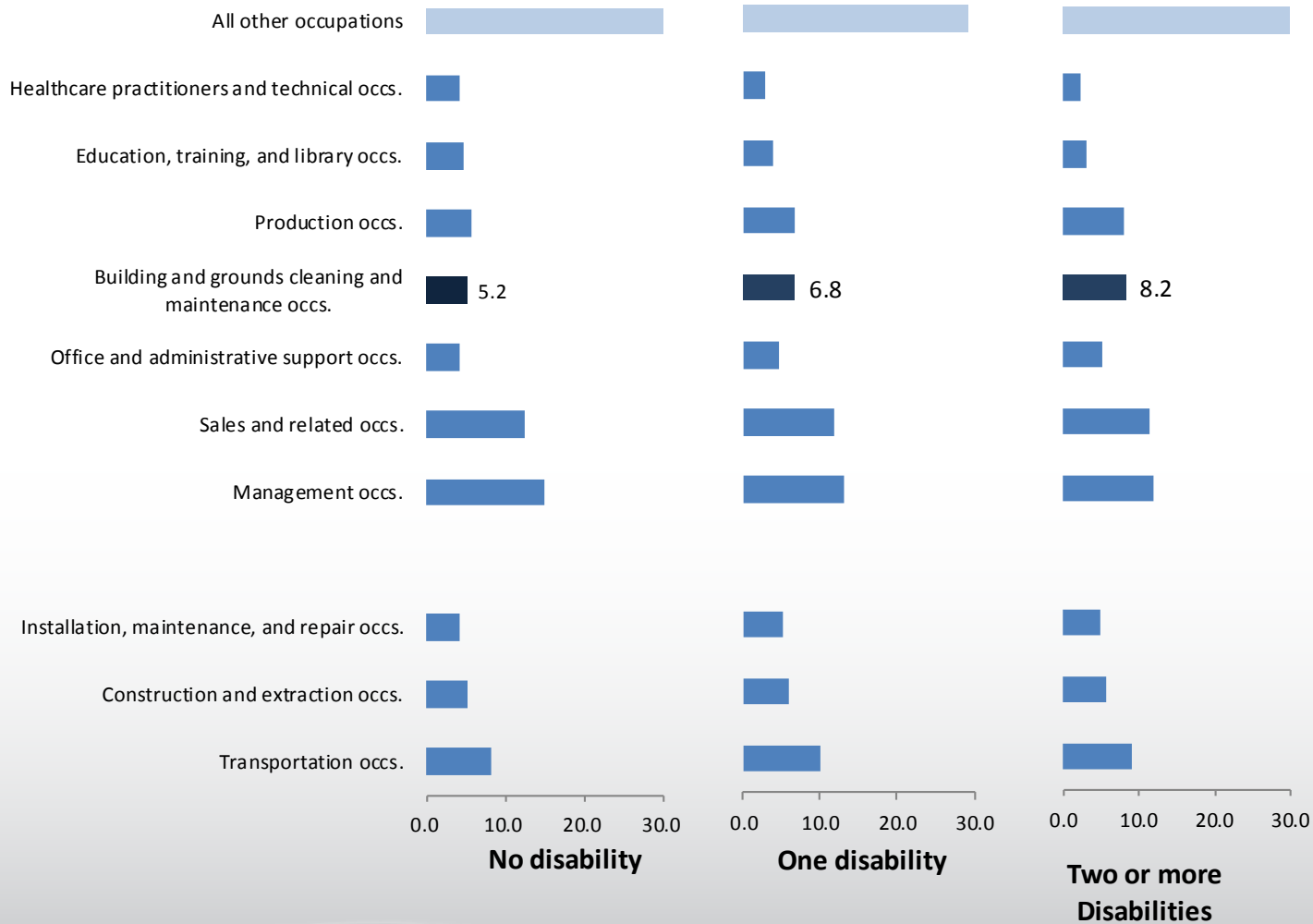
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Number of Disabilities for Civilian Employed Males 62 and Over: 2010-2014



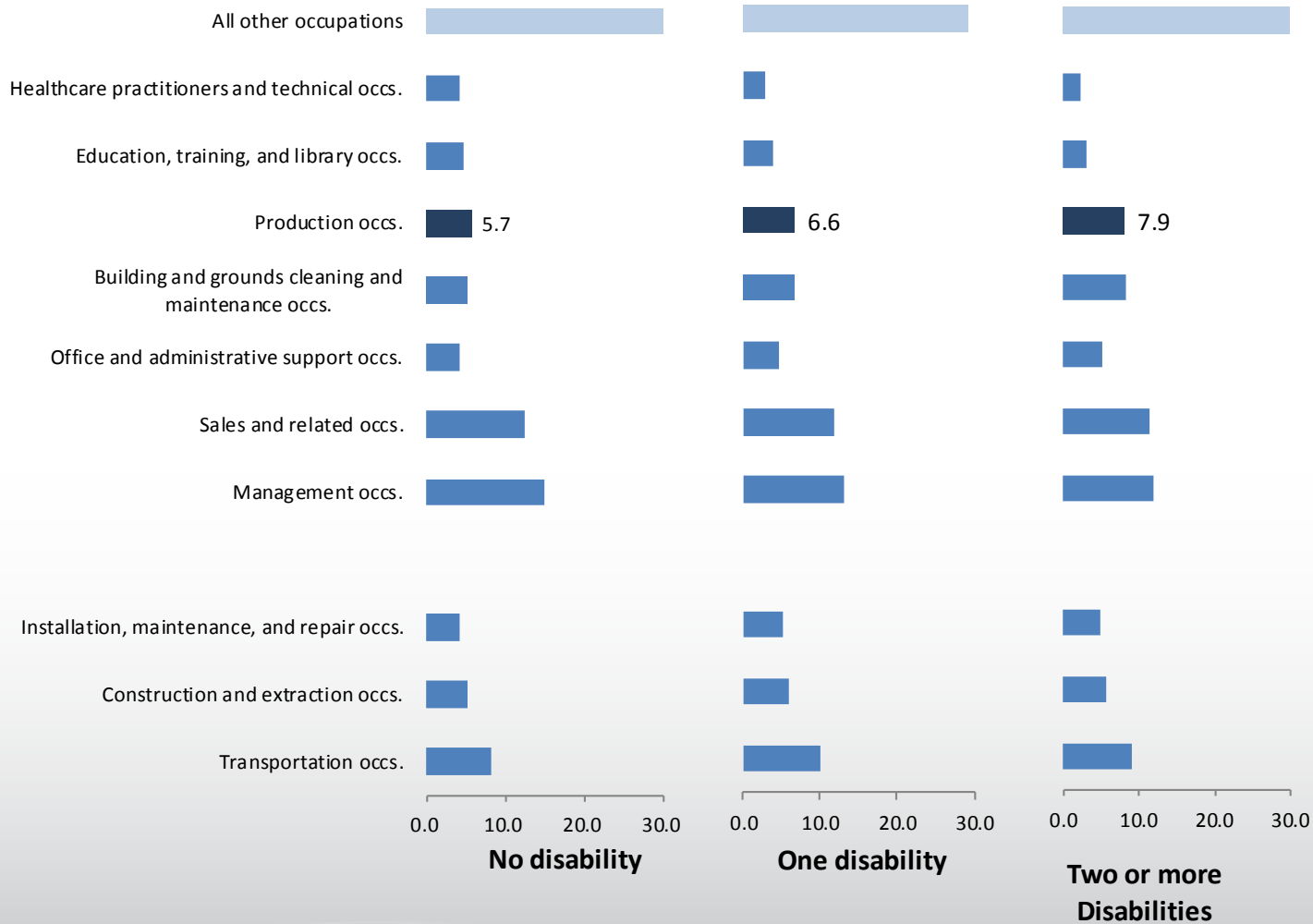
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Number of Disabilities for Civilian Employed Males 62 and Over: 2010-2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Occupation Distribution by Number of Disabilities for Civilian Employed Males 62 and Over: 2010-2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-year American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Discussion

Labor Force Participation Rate

- For men and women, the labor force participation (LFP) rate was lowest for the population with two-or-more disabilities compared with one disability or no disabilities.
- Men had a larger LFP rate in the 62 and over population among people with none, one, or multiple disabilities.
- LFP rate was greater for people with hearing impairment. This finding may be due to people responding that they have a hearing impairment even if they use a hearing aid to successfully correct for their hearing loss (Brault, 2009).

Type of work by type of disability

- Compared with people with other disabilities, a greater share of older people with **hearing loss** worked in Management occupations
- People with **cognitive impairment** were more concentrated in Building and grounds cleaning occupations than people with other disabilities.
- About 17% of people with **ambulatory difficulties** worked in Office and administrative support occupations

Type of work by Number of disabilities

- A greater share of men and women with disabilities worked in Building and grounds cleaning occupations than people without disabilities
- A larger share of men and women with no disabilities worked in Management occupations than people with disabilities

Conclusions

- Preliminary results in this paper inform us about the older population with disabilities and the type of work that they do. This work can help inform future research.

Presentation Bibliography

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American Community Survey:

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>