Conceptual and Measurement Issues are Complex

Poverty
- Hard to define
- Multi-dimensional
- Context specific

What is poverty?
Minimum standard of well-being
Economic, Social, Health
Control over one’s life

Disability
- Hard to define
- Multi-dimensional
- Context specific

What is disability?
Emerges from interaction between functional limitations and environment
Control over one’s life
Measuring Poverty

- Absolute vs. Relative
  - For example, food poverty vs. bottom quintile
- Headcount vs. Degree of Poverty (e.g., poverty gap)
- Permanent vs. Transitory
- Income based – e.g., program eligibility in many countries
- Consumption based
- Adjusting for household size/ equivalence scales
- Human indicator based, e.g. Human Poverty Index (life expectancy, illiteracy, access to water, percent underweight infants)
World Bank Poverty Measures

- Consumption based
  - Home production, bartering
  - More accurately collected in developing countries
  - More closely tied to long-term average well being
  - More directly tied to quality of life
- Start with food poverty line, and add in non-food expenditures of those at the margin
- PPP lines used to make comparisons across countries – but really only for similar countries
ICF Model of Disability
Identifying Disability

• Body function, Activity or Participation level?
• In actual environment? “Average” environment? Optimal environment?
• Which “arrows and boxes” we focus on depends on the questions being asked?
• Challenge of space on censuses or surveys
• But key issue is that disability is not a binary concept
Disability is very Heterogeneous

- Type of functional limitations – physical, cognitive or developmental, sensory, psychological
- Degree of difficulties – mild to absolute
- Date of onset – birth to old age
- Environment – physical, cultural, policy, personal resources
Where do you draw the line?
Combining Disability and Poverty

- Poverty causes disability
  - Malnutrition, poor health services, dangerous working and living conditions
- Disability causes poverty
  - Poor access to education and work
  - Social stigma and exclusion
But even more complicated...

- Increased income can increase disability rates
  - Increased survival from trauma or disease
  - Old age
- Relationship between poverty and disability depends on definition of disability used
- As economies develop, different skills are valued differently – e.g., changing importance of physical vs. mental abilities
Extra Costs of Disability

- To achieve the same minimum standard of living, people with disabilities need more resources
- How do we measure the costs of having a disability?
- Should disabled people have a separate poverty line?
Sen’s Capability Model and the Social Model of Disability

- Both state that what is important is participation -- do people have the resources necessary to have access to core opportunities all people should have?
- If having a disability adds more costs, do they need more resources to meet this minimum standard?
How do you assess these costs?

- Directly assess the extra costs of actual goods and services used only by disabled people
- Estimate the value of goods and services required by disabled people to undertake core activities (or to have Sen’s capabilities)
- Estimate how much income a disabled person would need to have same utility as a non-disabled person – one method is to look at impact on assets of people with same incomes (Zaidi & Burchardt)
Data Needs

- Data on functional limitations – degree of detail differs depending on nature of questions being asked:
  - Equality of opportunities?
  - Service provision?
  - Functional assessment of population?
- Linked to data on poverty – consumption, social participation
- Panel data – to untangle dual causality
- Cross-cultural comparisons need to be made with care
Good News

- Data getting better
  - Availability
  - Quality
  - Though still have issue of lack of panel data and tying disability data to socio-economic data
- Growing interest in topic
  - Growing awareness
  - CRPD monitoring requirements
- Every study can make an impact
Thank You