

Virtually Invisible Women: Women with Disabilities in Mainstream Psychological Theory and Research

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Abstract: A classical content analysis of PsycINFO journal abstracts from 1999 to 2003 revealed that women with disabilities are virtually invisible in mainstream psychology. We explore the implications of this invisibility.

Key Words: women with disabilities, content analysis, psychology

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Introduction

Ask most people to name the largest minority population in the U.S., and many will respond readily “people of color” or some variation on the racial/ethnic minority theme. The true answer to the question is far more surprising. People with disabilities are the largest minority population in the U.S., accounting for 19.3% or some 49.7 million of the civilian noninstitutionalized population five years of age and older. Additionally, disability is a fluid status, and after the age of 80, 73.6% of the U.S. population will be considered to have a disability. Though finding a “clear, concise, and consistent definition of disability remains elusive”, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 identifies a person with a disability as any person having a “physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities,” or as having “a record of” or being “regarded as having such an impairment” (S.933, section 3).

The American Psychological Association (APA), the largest professional organization for psychologists in the US and Canada, has defined multiculturalism as a perspective that “recognizes the broad scope of dimensions of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, class status, education, religious/spiritual orientation, and other cultural dimensions” (APA, 2002, p. 11). For the past several decades, the APA has voiced a strong commitment to multiculturalism, supporting multicultural research and establishing several societies and divisions with a multicultural focus. Psychology’s stated commitment to multicultural issues, coupled with the fact that people with disabilities comprise the largest minority population in the United States, illustrate the importance of focusing on disability issues within psychology. Further, because more than 25 million girls and women in the United States live with some form of disability, and because women are overrepresented in the population of

individuals with disabilities (McNeil, 2001), women with disabilities should be a particular focus of psychological research.

Disability Issues in Psychological Theory and Research

Two paradigms have historically dominated perceptions of disability internationally: the medical model and the social/minority model. In the medical model, disability is reduced to a medical condition or deficit intrinsic to the individual (Tate & Pledger, 2003), and the focus for this paradigm is on achieving a cure. The newer minority/social model considers disability to be an intersection of characteristics of individuals and their social and physical environments. This new paradigm treats the individual as a whole person and incorporates environmental and situational contexts (Tate & Pledger, 2003), transforming disability into a social issue (Pledger, 2003). Thus disability, rather than being rooted in some medical condition, is a consequence of inaccessible environments. Because of its deficit-centered focus, disability activists consider the medical model of disability an outdated paradigm for understanding disability and advocate for the new paradigm that considers disability to be an example of cultural diversity. Noteworthy is the fact that this “new” paradigm has almost a 30-year history in the United States. Introduced in the U.S. by the late 1970s, one could reasonably expect contemporary psychology to reflect the social disability model.

Intersections: Disability and Other Identities

Psychological research often conceptualizes identities as unidimensional. While it is relatively easy to find research focused on issues relevant to single identities such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation, the multidimensionality of marginalized statuses remains, for the most part, invisible. A glimpse of statistics of people living with disabilities in the U.S. quickly reveals the folly of adopting a unidimensional perspective on identity. Because Caucasian people have a higher mean age than people of other racial/ethnic groups, one might expect this population to have higher rates of disability. Recent U.S. Census Bureau statistics note, however, that Caucasian people over the age of 65 have a lower overall disability rate than people from other racial and ethnic groups. The prevalence rate of severe¹ disabilities is also disproportionately higher for African Americans in the U.S. Intersections of sex, ethnicity and disability statuses reveal that across all ethnicities, women have higher levels of disability than their male counterparts (McNeil, 2001). The prevalence of disability status by age, sex, race, and Hispanic ethnicity is included in Table 1.

Disability status also intersects with educational level and socioeconomic status. Regardless of the level of disability (i.e., severe or not severe), people with disabilities generally have lower education levels than people without disabilities. Additionally, ethnic minorities with disabilities typically have lower rates of education than Caucasians with disabilities. For example, of the 7.2% of college graduates in the U.S. with physical disabilities, 90% are Caucasian and just 4% are African-Americans, illustrating an intersection of ethnicity and educational status. Lower educational levels place those with disabilities at risk for discrimination as well as higher rates of poverty, low income, and unemployment.

Similarly Shut Up and Shut Out: Women with Disabilities in Feminist Psychology

As we have argued previously, the presence of disability among women in the U.S. makes a compelling case for including disability within the multicultural spectrum of psychology in general. Given feminist psychology's specific interest in understanding "the lives of girls and women in all their diversities," and in encouraging "scholarship on the social construction of gender relations across multicultural contexts" (APA, 2004, p. 1), we would expect feminist psychology particularly to recognize disability within the multicultural spectrum. Yet, a glance at the APA Division 35's (Society for the Psychology of Women) website suggests that even feminist psychologists who are committed to recognizing other multicultural identities for women sometimes neglect women with disabilities. Thus, the aforementioned website affirms the Division's commitment to recognizing "... a diversity of women's experiences which result from a variety of factors, including ethnicity, culture, language, socioeconomic status, age, and sexual orientation" (APA, 2004, p. 1), but curiously, omits disability from this list of experiences.

Historically marginalized groups such as poor women and African Americans have been "shut up" and "shut out" of psychological inquiry (Saris & Johnston-Robledo, 2000). By crossing indicators of ethnic minority status with the keywords "adolescent/teenager," Cauce, Ryan, & Grove (1998) also found that this invisibility in the psychological literature extended to adolescents of color. Further, by conducting a content analysis of *Child Development* and the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, they found that when adolescent ethnic minorities were represented in the psychological literature, they were more often poor or of lower socioeconomic status.

Motivated by this dearth of research on previously silenced groups, we sought to examine whether women with disabilities were similarly silenced in mainstream psychological literature. Specifically, we sought to examine the prevalence of women with disabilities in journals identified by the American Psychological Association (APA) as mainstream psychology journals. Because the APA is an institution with international influence, its identification of what constitutes "mainstream" may have some additional applicability even outside of the United States. In fact, a number of the journals identified by the APA as "mainstream," are published outside of the United States (e.g., *British Journal of Health Psychology*, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*).

We performed a content analysis of psychological abstracts to investigate three research questions:

1. To what extent are women with disabilities (WWD) visible in APA-identified mainstream psychological research?
2. Do mainstream abstracts reflect the medical model or social model of disability?
3. Are the multicultural identities of WWD reflected in mainstream psychological research?

Method

Classical Content Analysis

Classical content analysis consists of three steps: (1) selection of data; (2) determination of categories, and (3) coding .

Selection

Following the methods used by Saris and Johnston-Robledo (2000), we conducted a classical content analysis using journal article abstracts listed on PsycINFO during the past five years (January 1999 to December 2003). We conducted a combined search of the words “women” and “disability” or “disabled,” and because the APA has advocated for the use of the term “handicap” to refer to the environmental and attitudinal barriers that a person with a disability may encounter, we also conducted a combined search of the words “women” and “handicap” or “handicapped.” We then used Saris and Johnston-Robledo’s (2000) method of determining which abstracts were “mainstream.” Specifically, we examined whether the abstract was published in a journal identified in the APA’s 1997 publication, *Journals in Psychology: A Resource Listing for Authors*.²

Categories

Classical content analysis uses predetermined categories to reduce text so that it might be analyzed quantitatively (Ryan & Bernard, 2001). After identifying mainstream abstracts, we coded them for content using pre-selected categories. The first two categories were mutually exclusive: (1) Only Women (this category was coded if WWD were the focus of the research) and (2) Both Women and Men (this category was coded if both WWD and men with disabilities were highlighted). We used these selection procedures to address our first research question regarding the extent to which women with disabilities are visible in mainstream psychological research in the U.S. In order to address our second research question, those abstracts coded as, “only women” were then coded using the following additional mutually exclusive categories: (1) Medical Model³, and (2) Social Model.

All selected abstracts were then coded using four additional categories that addressed our third research question: Are other identities of WWD included in mainstream psychological research? These additional categories were: (1) Poor/Low-Income (the abstract recognized the demographic of gender, disability, and poor/low-income status); (2) Race/Ethnicity (the abstract recognized the intersection of gender, disability, and race/ethnicity); (3) Age (the abstract recognized the intersection of gender, disability, and age), and (4) Lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) (the abstract recognized the intersection of gender, disability, and being lesbian, gay, or bisexual). These final four categories were not mutually exclusive; an abstract could be coded as addressing both age and race/ethnicity.

Coding

Two coders (the first and third authors) agreed upon the pre-selected categories and then coded the abstracts independently. The coders then entered their findings into an SPSS data set by indicating “yes” or “no” when a category was present or not within an abstract. Cross tabulations of both coders’ data were performed for each category to determine how often both

coders identified each category as present across all abstracts. Inter-rater reliabilities, indicated by Kappa, were very good (Kappa across categories = .72-1.0): (1) Only Women (Kappa = 1.0), (2) Both Women and Men (Kappa = .97), (3) Medical Model (Kappa = .72), (4) Social Model (Kappa = .94), (5) Poor/Low-Income (Kappa = .79), (6) Race/Ethnicity (Kappa = 1.0), (7) Age (Kappa = 1.0), and (8) LGB (Kappa = 1.0). We resolved all discrepancies through discussion.

Results

Presence of Women with Disabilities in Mainstream Psychological Research in the U.S.

The PsycINFO search revealed 19,976 published journal abstracts using the word “women,” 5,469 journal abstracts using the word “disability” or “disabled” and 449 journal abstracts using the word “handicap” or “handicapped.” A search for a combination of these terms produced 397 records. This means that only 2% of all journal abstracts identified using the word “women” also included disability-related terms. Of these 397 records, 81% were found in special topic journals like *Disability and Society*, or *Sexuality and Disability*. Only 76 of the 397 records were found in journals that the APA had identified as “mainstream.” Closer examination of these 76 records, revealed that 7 of these abstracts referred to “self-handicapping behavior.” Because these abstracts were related to the study of actively hindering one’s own task performance and were unrelated to disability, we eliminated them from our analysis. Thus, only 69 (17%) of those 397 records mentioning women with disabilities were found in APA-identified mainstream journals.

We found that these 69 abstracts spanned a minority of journals. Only 39 (10%) of the 385 APA mainstream journals published these women-with-disability-related abstracts. Further, a 2003 special issue of the feminist psychology journal *Women and Therapy* was the source of 10 (14.5%) of these abstracts. In 14.5% of the abstracts, the research discussed took place outside of the U.S., demonstrating a low emphasis on disability-related issues within psychology in the U.S.

As seen in [Table 2](#), in 32% of the cases, people with disabilities were mentioned in the abstract solely, and were not the focus of the research at all. Women and men shared the focus of the research on disability in 35% of the abstracts. Women with disabilities were a specific focus of the research in only 33% of the cases. The types of disabilities identified in each of the 69 journal abstracts are illustrated in [Table 3](#). As this table illustrates, 43.5% of the abstracts used disability as a generic term with no reference to specific types of disabilities.

Medical Models and Social Models of Disability in Mainstream Psychological Research

We found that 9 of the 23 abstracts that focused on women with disabilities specifically reflected the medical model. For example, a 2001 study compared coping strategies in women diagnosed with 3 different types of chronic pain conditions: fibromyalgia, neck/shoulder pain, and back pain. The researchers found passive coping to be related to general dysfunction stemming from pain, and not to a specific diagnosis of fibromyalgia (Mellegard, Grossi, & Soares, 2001). Because this abstract focused on coping, which is a behavioral response intrinsic to an individual, we coded it as a medical model. The social model of disability was reflected in

11 of the 23 mainstream abstracts specifically focused on women with disabilities. Among them was a 2003 study of stereotypes about disability (e.g., that people with disabilities are helpless, challenged intellectually, and asexual) that found that societal representations of disability had a negative influence on the intimate relationships of women with disabilities. In 3 abstracts, we did not have enough information to determine the model (i.e., medical, social) the author had used to construct disability.

Intersections of Disability with Other Identities

The intersections of disability with other aspects of identity are illustrated in Table 4. Only 18 of the 69 abstracts (26%) addressed the intersection of gender, disability, and other aspects of identity such as age, race/ethnicity, poor/low-income status, or lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) status. Specifically, 16 abstracts mentioned the intersection of gender and disability with one of these aspects; two did so with two aspects.

Gender, Disability, and One Other Identity

Most of the abstracts examined the intersections of gender and disability and one other aspect of identity such as age, race/ethnicity, or low socioeconomic status. Age was the focus of 8 of the 18 abstracts. Among them was a 2003 study of the trajectories of disability from onset until death among a sample of Norwegians with disabilities aged 80 and older. The study found that older women were significantly more likely than men to experience serious physical and psychological effects due to disability. Race/ethnicity in combination with gender and disability was the focus in 6 other abstracts. For instance, a 2003 article discussed the culture of deafness and issues of cross-cultural therapy for minority deaf women, and noted that mental health professionals have traditionally neglected the needs of this population. Finally, poor or low-income status was the focus of 2 abstracts. One was a longitudinal study of women who received welfare benefits in an urban Michigan county that found that women with a co-occurrence of “human capital” problems with mental health and physical health problems were less likely to find and keep employment compared with women who did not have these problems.

Gender, Disability and Two Other Identities

Only two of the 18 abstracts focused on the intersection of gender and disability also examined other aspects of identity. A 2003 qualitative study examining conceptions of illness and disability of middle-aged African-American women with arthritis participating in a peer group health promotion program found that participants focused more on the communal aspects of having arthritis than the personal aspects of the condition. The other abstract encouraged counseling psychologists to recognize and incorporate into their practice the notion that although people may identify by race/ethnicity, disability or LGB status, more than one of these aspects of identity may be salient within individuals at any time (Bowman, 2003).

Discussion

We used this classical content analysis to investigate the coverage of women with disabilities in APA-identified mainstream psychological research. Our analyses revealed that research on women with disabilities accounted for a rather small proportion of psychological abstracts. Specifically, just 2% of all abstracts using the word “women” also incorporated disability-related terms. Further, only 17% of articles on women with disabilities were published in APA-identified mainstream psychology journals. It is important to note that 14% of these mainstream articles stemmed from a 2003 special issue of the feminist psychology journal, *Women and Therapy*, dedicated to women’s visible and invisible disabilities. The paucity of research on women with disabilities in mainstream psychological research is disturbing for at least two reasons. First, people with disabilities constitute the largest “minority” population in the U.S. . Second, the dearth suggests that disability, in contrast to other identities (e.g., ethnicity, sexual orientation), receives token status in mainstream psychology in the U.S. Disability has yet to be integrated fully within mainstream psychological research. Alas, psychology’s historic neglect of disability issues continues .

Despite the social model of disability’s 30-year history in the U.S., we also found that only a handful of abstracts focused on the social model of disability. Not surprisingly, most of these stemmed from the aforementioned special issue of *Women and Therapy*. Almost half (n = 9) of the 23 abstracts that focused on women with disabilities reflected the old medical model paradigm. In light of rehabilitation psychology’s historic focus on factors internal to the person with the disability, this finding is hardly surprising. Though a shift from the medical model to the social model in psychological research is long overdue, the latter model is not foolproof, either. Indeed, critics charge that the social model remains biased in favor of Caucasian men and obscures the needs of women with disabilities who share other minority identities .

Our study also found only a handful of abstracts that discussed disability within the context of other identities. The unidimensional focus of abstracts attending to research on women with disabilities is part of a larger problem within psychological research: the seeming inability to conceptualize people in all of their rich complexity and multiplicity.

Our study has implications for future research on women with disabilities. The most obvious, of course, is that more research on women with disabilities, particularly research that reflects the social model of disability, is desperately needed. Additionally, the absence of research makes it difficult for the field to establish theories around disability-related issues. This in turn hinders the development of theories that describe disability and other intersecting identities. Collins (1998) advocates for the use of a intersectionality framework where social phenomena such as race, socioeconomic status, and gender “mutually construct one another” (p. 63). In combination with additional research on WWD, such a framework could enhance the conceptual and methodological development of future theory and research on disability.

Our findings also raise provocative questions about why research with and on behalf of women with disabilities remains so scant in mainstream psychology. Scholars who have written about the exclusion of populations such as poor women , women of color , and people who are poor sound similar themes. In her examination of the exclusion of poor women in psychological research, Reid identified three obstacles that appear equally relevant to the exclusion of women with disabilities: personal affiliation, investigator training, and effort maximization.

Regarding personal affiliation, Reid has criticized psychologists for studying populations with whom they work, have easy access, or whom they most closely resemble. Herewith, we state the obvious: not only is more psychological research needed on disability issues, but more researchers with disabilities are critically needed to bolster the theoretical and empirical literature on women (and men) with disabilities. Moreover, greater collaboration between the disability community and researchers is necessary. And as Olkin and Pledger rightly caution, it is insufficient to simply include people with disabilities as researchers; they must have decision-making power and funding authority.

Reid has further argued that investigator training might be influential in excluding some populations from psychological research. She notes that researchers may be inadequately trained for work with diverse populations. Disability activists are unequivocal about the limited training that psychologists receive about theory and research relevant to people with disabilities. Accordingly, we join the chorus of disability activists advocating for psychologists to become multiculturally competent with regard to disability-related theory, research and practice.

The third obstacle, effort maximization, notes that researchers are more likely to exclude a population from research when they perceive that the population is not readily available, or may require special accommodations to allow participation. Indeed, people with disabilities may need a variety of accommodations, such as physical access to a research site or extra assistance to complete an interview or survey. With regard to accommodations for people with disabilities in psychological research, we join Olkin in identifying accommodation and access as civil rights issues.

The prevailing myth of objectivity in psychology notwithstanding, the reality of research is that it is rarely neutral. Rather, it may be used for emancipatory or oppressive ends (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000). As such, the research endeavor is implicitly relevant to issues of civil rights. The fact that people with disabilities share many of the same social realities as other historically disenfranchised populations (e.g., poverty, lack of access to education and employment, etc.), attests that advancing knowledge about disability through research is an important social justice and civil rights issue. Thus, we embrace the injunction that “social researchers dare to speak hard truths with theoretical rigor and political savvy” (Fine, Weis, Weseen & Wong, 2000, p. 125). Indeed, we hope that our content analysis of the invisibility of women with disabilities in mainstream psychology will “inform and encourage social movements for ‘what could be’” (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000, p. 126). In the case of mainstream psychology, “what could be” is more visibility about the experiences of women with disabilities in psychological research. In turn, increased visibility within psychological research could foster greater advocacy for the rights of people with disability in and beyond the discipline of psychology.

Our study also has theoretical implications for the psychological study of intersecting multicultural identities for women with disabilities. On the one hand, understanding the complex phenomena associated with disability is in and of itself important. On the other, focusing on disability solely may obscure other important identities such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. Moreover, it is important that disability not be the sole focus of the

study. Thus, we were heartened to find abstracts in our content analysis describing studies conducted with women with disabilities that also investigated experiences such as wanting to leave an intimate partner or beliefs and experiences about sexuality .

In this study, we made a methodological decision to narrow our analyses to abstracts identified as “mainstream” by the APA. We do not wish to imply that literature published in APA-identified mainstream journals is more important or noteworthy than that published in non-mainstream journals. Indeed, primarily because they are beyond the mainstream and often are linked to the disability community, non-mainstream journals are the sites of cutting edge theory and research that reflect the social model paradigm and, as such, serve as exemplars for future directions in theory and research. We chose to focus our analysis on APA-identified mainstream journals largely because these journals can easily be found in the standard collections of most U.S. university libraries and therefore constitute what the majority of the field in the U.S. is reading. Segregating issues of disability into special topic journals contributes to a lack of knowledge about disability-related issues for professionals in the field, who may not have had the occasion to seek out the sometimes harder-to-find journals.

Although our study contributes to the knowledge about the presence of women with disabilities in mainstream psychological research, it is not without limitations. One of the most important is our study’s sole reliance on abstracts . It is possible that although some abstracts may not have included words such as “disability” or “handicap,” perusal of journal articles might have found disability issues to be a main focus. For example, researchers writing about issues of mental health infrequently refer to this issue as “disability.” Thus, our results may underestimate the actual number of articles focused on women with disability in mainstream psychology. Finally, our conclusions may reflect a manuscript submission bias. It is possible that there are more psychologists developing theory and conducting research on women with disabilities who choose to submit their work to non-mainstream journals because they perceive those journals to be more receptive to the focus of their work (J. Cohen, personal communication, November 15, 2004).

Several recent developments attest to a growing attention to disability within mainstream psychology. For example, a 2003 special section of the APA’s flagship journal, *American Psychologist*, was dedicated to new perspectives on disability. Additionally, the APA Committee on Disability Issues in Psychology recently published a Resource Guide for Psychology Graduate Students With Disabilities, and disability is included in the title of APA’s 2005 National Multicultural Conference and Summit theme, *The Psychology of Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Disability: What Works, With Whom and Under What Circumstances*. These important developments notwithstanding, our study shows that mainstream psychological theory and research lags far behind the APA’s stated commitment to including disability status within the scope of multicultural perspectives in psychology. As we see it, the challenge that lies ahead for psychology is to make the now virtually invisible women with disabilities -- with all of their rich and complex multicultural diversity -- thoroughly visible in mainstream psychological research.

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Table 1: Prevalence of Disability and Severe Disability by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin (McNeil, 2001, p 9-10).⁴

Characteristics		Total Population	Any Disability		Severe Disability	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Male, All Races	All ages	130,985	24,331	18.6%	14,754	11.3%
	Under 24 years old	49,157	5,181	10.5%	2,509	5.1%
	25 to 64 years old	68,331	12,348	18.1%	7,825	11.5%
	65 years and over	13,498	6,801	50.4%	4,421	32.8%
Female, All Races	All ages	136,680	28,265	20.7%	18,216	13.3%
	Under 24 years old	47,347	3,441	7.3%	1,689	3.6%
	25 to 64 years old	70,768	14,145	20.0%	8,542	12.1%
	65 years and over	18,565	10,679	57.5%	7,652	41.2%
Male, White, Non Hispanic	All ages	94,664	18,266	19.3%	10,460	11.0%
	Under 24 years old	31,878	5,900	18.5%	1,591	5.0%
	25 to 64 years old	51,372	9,160	17.8%	5,430	10.6%
	65 years and over	11,414	5,550	48.6%	3,439	30.1%
Female, White, Non Hispanic	All ages	98,570	21,212	21.5%	13,167	13.4%
	Under 24 years old	30,934	2,344	7.6%	1,107	3.6%
	25 to 64 years old	51,982	10,079	19.4%	5,956	11.5%
	65 years and over	15,655	8,787	56.1%	6,105	39.0%
Male, Black	All ages	16,048	3,380	21.1%	2,511	15.6%
	Under 24 years old	7,543	859	11.4%	509	6.7%
	25 to 64 years old	7,457	1,879	25.2%	1,493	20.0%
	65 years and over	1,048	643	61.4%	509	48.6%
Female, Black	All ages	18,322	3,957	21.6%	2,871	15.7%
	Under 24 years old	7,630	614	8.0%	309	4.0%

	25 to 64 years old	9,081	2,257	24.9%	1,695	18.7%
	65 years and over	1,611	1,086	67.4%	867	53.8%
Male, Hispanic	All ages	15,372	1,937	12.6%	1,311	8.5%
	Under 24 years old	7,593	559	7.4%	312	4.1%
	25 to 64 years old	7,094	1,002	14.1%	712	10.0%
	65 years and over	686	376	54.9%	288	42.0%
Female, Hispanic	All ages	14,714	2,215	15.1%	1,594	10.8%
	Under 24 years old	6,938	388	5.6%	214	3.1%
	25 to 64 years old	6,872	1,295	18.9%	920	13.4%
	65 years and over	904	531	58.8%	460	50.9%

Table 2. Summary of mainstream psychological journal abstracts found using the words “women” and “disability”, “disabled”, “handicap” or “handicapped” in a PSYCHINFO database search (N = 69).

Description of Abstract	Number	Percentage
People with disabilities are mentioned, but are not the focus of the research.	22	32%
Both women and men with disabilities are the focus of the research.	24	35%
Research is focused only on women with disabilities.	23	33%

Table 3. Summary of disabilities identified in mainstream psychology abstracts focused on women and disabilities (N= 69).

Type of Disability ^a	Number of abstracts	Percentage
Abuse-related disability	3	4.3%
Alzheimer's disease	1	1.4%
Arthritis	2	2.9%
Cancer	1	1.4%
Chronic pain, fibromyalgia	2	2.9%
Deafness	1	1.4%
Depression or depression with PTSD	3	4.3%
Developmental/intellectual disabilities	6	8.7%
Disability (specific disability not specified)	30	43.5%
Drug abuse	1	1.4%
Eating disorders	2	2.9%
HIV	1	1.4%
Limb reconstruction	1	1.4%
Multiple sclerosis	1	1.4%
Musculoskeletal disorder/musculoskeletal pain	2	2.9%
Obsessive compulsive disorder	1	1.4%
Physical disabilities (specific disabilities not specified)	5	7.2%
Postural tachycardia syndrome	1	1.4%
Psychiatric disabilities (specific disabilities not specified)	2	2.9%
Reproductive cycle conditions	1	1.4%
Schizophrenia	1	1.4%
Scleroderma	1	1.4%
Total	69	100%

^a Rather than relying on the U.S. Census Bureau's six-category classification of disability to aggregate the disabilities that we found in our analyses of the mainstream abstracts, we have, consistent with our social model epistemology, reflected the terms that the abstracts used.

Table 4. Summary of additional aspects of identity present in mainstream psychological journal abstracts about gender and disability (N = 69).

Description of Abstract	Number	Percentage
Gender, disability and no additional aspects of identity	51	73.9%
Gender, disability, and one other aspect of identity	16	23.2%
Gender, disability, and two other aspects of identity	2	2.9%

Endnotes

¹ Individuals at least 15 years old are considered to have a severe disability if they used a wheelchair, cane, crutches or a walker; had a mental or emotional condition that seriously interfered with everyday activities; received federal benefits because they were unable to work; had Alzheimer's disease or mental retardation or another development disability; or were unable to perform functional activities (e.g., walking, using stairs), activities of daily living (e.g., getting around inside of the home), instrumental activities of daily living (e.g., preparing meals, using the telephone), work around the house, or if between the ages of 16 and 67, were unemployed because of a condition related to their disability .

² Examples of journals cited in this reference include *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *American Journal of Psychology*, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, and *Psychological Bulletin*.

³ We coded abstracts as using the medical model if: (1) personality, coping or other variables intrinsic to the individual influenced the experience of disability, or (2) the abstract discussed how psychological and/or physical disability was created as a result of abuse, without discussing how structural or societal barriers limited options for women who have been abused.

⁴ Numbers in thousands.

