

ARTICLE: **Difference in Healthcare Usage, Pharmacy Prescriptions, and Healthcare Cost for Special Olympic Athletes Compared to Non-athletes with ID**
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Key Points:

- Individuals with ID routinely require access to healthcare and pharmacies to function in daily life
- Special Olympics athletes are more likely to be screened for their own health and require less healthcare services
- Most individuals with ID not involved with SOWI receive medical care through Medicaid
- Healthcare provided by SOWI vs. Medicaid are examined in this study

Glossary:

Healthy Athlete Program: branch of Special Olympics that provides screenings and health education for athletes in eight disciplines
Medicaid: a system funded by both the state and the federal system for individuals with disabilities (as well as children, pregnant women, and low-income adults)

Why this article matters:

-Healthcare and pharmacy usage among those with intellectual disability (ID) are relied on very heavily to provide necessary care. Among those with ID who participate in Special Olympics of Wisconsin (SOWI), these individuals are provided with increased services to address health needs and disparities. For those who are not involved with Special Olympics, Medicaid is commonly used to address healthcare needs. In the first academic article addressing these concerns, this study investigates the differences in healthcare for those in Special Olympics and those who are not.

Description of the Study:

-Using Medicaid data provided from 2007-2017 by the state of Wisconsin, as well as data provided by Special Olympics, researchers ran analyses for both healthcare and pharmacy claims/cost for people with ID. By running analyses, researchers compared the average number of healthcare/pharmacies claims and costs between those who participated in Special Olympics WI and those who did not. Authors of the study sought to investigate, on average, healthcare usage per year for those involved with or not involved with Special Olympics.

Research Questions:

-How do healthcare and pharmacy claims/costs compare for individuals with Intellectual Disability for those involved with Special Olympics WI and those who are not involved?

Important Results:

Several measurements were made to garner results in the study. All the measures used by researchers revealed that those in Special Olympics, on average, utilized less healthcare and pharmacy services than those not involved.

The results are as follows:

- (1)Special Olympics WI athletes had a lower mean number of healthcare claims than non-athletes.
- (2)Special Olympics WI athletes had a lower mean cost of healthcare service than non-athletes.
- (3)Special Olympics WI athletes had a lower mean total number of pharmacy claims than non-athletes.

How the results will be used:

-It can be hypothesized that participation in Special Olympics Healthy Athlete programs can lead to better health in those with intellectual disability. Healthcare and pharmacy claims are on a case-by-case basis and prior health status should still be a factor, nonetheless, enrollment in Special Olympics could be an important factor in an individual with ID and their person health. There are still disparities in all forms of healthcare for individuals with ID, and this study can serve as the first of its kind towards future research/policy changes in field of health.