



Introduction

- Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are **more likely to have chronic health problems** compared to adults without IDD.
- Due to high morbidity and the complex health issues of this population, an **annual health exam (AHE) is recommended for individuals with IDD.**
- In Ontario, **only 22% of adults (18 to 64) with IDD attended an AHE** in 2009-2010 compared to 26.4% of adults without IDD [1].
- **Self-referral is the primary method patients attend the AHE**, therefore it is crucial to **engage patients and/or caregivers** to increase uptake.

Purpose

To explore the utility of an intervention to increase AHE uptake among adults with IDD.

Methods

Figure 1. Overview of methods.

Target Population: Individuals with IDD who were Ontario Disability Support Program recipients (**N = 39,868**).



An **accessible information package** (including details about the AHE, its importance, instructions on how to book an appointment, and a link to a video of the written information) was mailed.

Why is it important that you get a yearly health check-up?

People with disabilities can have more health problems than other people. For example, people with disabilities can have problems with their heart, eyes and ears, or be overweight. Some people also have trouble knowing they are sick, so it is very important to go to the doctor or nurse regularly. Staying healthy will help you do the activities you like, be happier, and live longer.

How do you get a health check-up?

- 1 To book an appointment you or your caregiver should call your doctor or nurse and say: "Hello my name is _____ and I'm calling to book a yearly health check-up".
If no one answers the phone, leave a message with your name, phone number, and say: "I want to book a yearly health check-up". The receptionist should call you back to schedule the appointment.
- 2 Write down the date and time of the appointment and the address and phone number of your doctor or nurse's office.
- 3 If you do not know how to get to the office by yourself, ask someone to take you.
- 4 If you are going to be late or need to cancel the appointment call the office to let them know. Leave a message if no one picks up the phone.

Bring to the appointment:

- 1 Your health card. It might be green or it might be red and white.
- 2 All your pills, syrups, and inhalers.
- 3 A list of the things you and your caregiver think your doctor or nurse should know about your health.
- 4 The yellow page we have included in this package.

What happens at the health check-up?

This is an appointment you should have with your doctor or nurse once a year. They might call it the periodic health exam or visit. You can book it even when you are feeling well. You can still book other appointments throughout the year when you need to visit the doctor.
Your doctor or nurse might ask you if you have any pain, if you feel happy or sad, what medications you are taking, what illnesses you have, and ask you questions about what you do during the day.
You can ask them questions about your health. Your doctor or nurse might tell you what food to eat or that you should exercise more often. They might do a physical exam and check your body to make sure it is healthy. This can include things like checking your weight, heart rate, blood pressure, and taking a blood test. You can say no if there is anything you do not want done.

More resources:

You can find information that will help you communicate with health care workers. Go to: www.healthexam.ca



85 adults with IDD completed a telephone survey



85 caregivers (for 127 adults with IDD) completed a telephone survey

Results

- Participants
 - Age range: 22 to 68 years of age ($M = 42.02$, $SD = 12.23$)
 - Males: 43 (51%); Females: 41 (48%); Transgender: 1 (1%)
- Living Situation
 - Independently (alone, with friend, spouse, and/or children): 59
 - With family members (e.g., parents, siblings): 23
 - Group home: 2
 - Inpatient: 1

Results (Continued)

Figure 2. Do you think it is important for you to see a doctor every year for a health check-up?

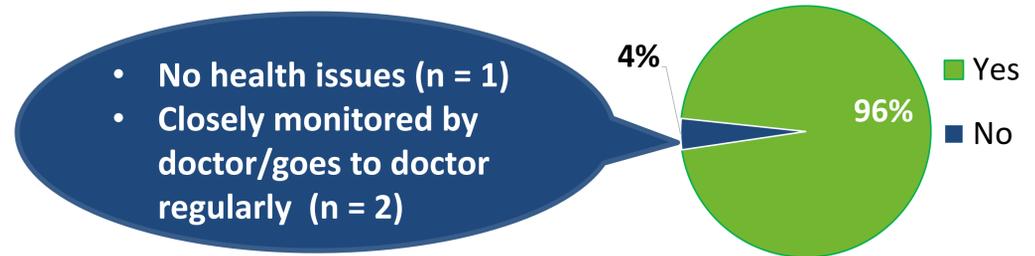
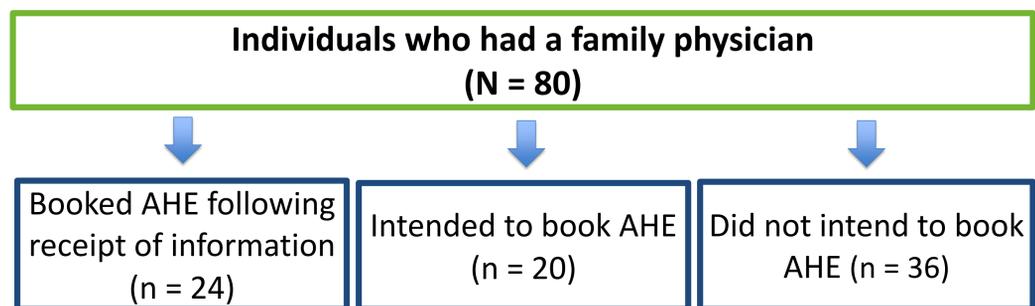


Figure 3. AHE booking intentions of adults with IDD who had a family physician.



Reasons individuals did not intend to book an AHE:

- Attended an AHE too recently or already booked an appointment (n = 26)
- Goes to the doctor regularly (n = 3)
- Too busy (n = 2)
- Perception that they are healthy (n = 2)
- Physician refusal (n = 2)
 - Participant was informed that physician does not perform AHEs
 - Participant was told they were not due for an AHE (had to wait for more than one year)

Implications and Conclusions

- Information mailed to adults with IDD may increase knowledge and awareness about AHEs.
- The majority of respondents viewed the AHE as important.
- However, promoting this preventive care opportunity to adults with IDD and their primary caregivers remains a challenge.
- Some individuals with IDD who perceive themselves as healthy often do not recognize the importance of attending the AHE for the purpose of preventive health care. **Further efforts to educate adults with IDD on the importance of the AHE may be useful in increasing uptake.**
- **Communication from physicians about the importance of the AHE is essential, as well as providing reminders to book the AHE.**
- Some physicians may not realize that the AHE is recommended for adults with IDD because an AHE is no longer emphasized for healthy, low-risk adults. **Further efforts to inform and incentivize physicians to follow recommended guidelines are needed.**

References

[1] Lunsby Y, Klein-Geltink JE, Yates EA, eds. (2013). *Atlas on the Primary Care of Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Ontario*. Toronto, ON: Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.