

The capability approach and disability: constraints on disabled people's participation

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Melanie

- 18-year old, volunteers at youth centre – under threat of closure
- Would like to 'go to places'
- Not in formal education, employment or training (left school at 16 with few qualifications)
- Was bullied as a child and suffers from low self esteem
- Wheelchair user and needs some personal assistance
- Lives with her mother who has been her carer but who is now herself unwell



Overview

- Key features of the social model of disability
- Synergies with the capability approach
- Life Opportunities Survey: social model design
- Restrictions on participation in leisure and cultural activities
- [Types of restriction for disabled and non-disabled people]
- Characteristics associated with greater restriction for disabled and non-disabled people
- How the capability approach can help the social model and vice versa

Social model (contrast individual or medical model)

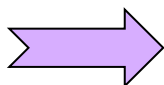
- Impairment: condition of body or mind
- Disability: restricted participation
 - ‘...the outcome of an oppressive relationship between people with impairments and the rest of society’ (Finkelstein, 1980)
 - arises from interaction between an individual’s impairment and the social, economic and physical environment
- Change society to meet the individual’s needs
- A matter of social justice not charity
- Disabled people as the experts
- Importance of ‘choice and control’

Capability approach (contrast utilitarianism and resource-based conceptions of social justice)

- ...to evaluate equality, well-being or social justice
- Subjective well-being can be misleading
 - conditioned expectations
- Income is a means not an end
 - differing rates of converting income into well-being
 - some valuable 'ends' not well captured by income
- Instead: capability set
 - your “real” or “substantive” freedom
 - all the things you are able to be and do
 - depends on your social, economic and physical environment as well as on your own characteristics

Equality Measurement Framework: building blocks

Inequality of substantive freedom (inequality in the central and valuable things in life that people can do and be)



3 aspects

- (i) outcomes (participation)
- (ii) process (dignity and respect; discrimination)
- (iii) autonomy (choice and control)



10 domains

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| D1 | Life | D6 | Productive and valued activities |
| D2 | Physical security | D7 | Participation, influence and voice |
| D3 | Health | D8 | Individual, family and social life |
| D4 | Education | D9 | Identity, expression and self-respect |
| D5 | Standard of living | D10 | Legal security |

Inequality by 6 characteristics (gender including transgender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion/belief ...)

Synergies

- Disadvantage is produced by an interaction between an individual and his/her environment
- Autonomy (choice and control) is crucial
- Discrimination (how you are treated by others) matters in its own right
- Defining priorities should be a participatory process

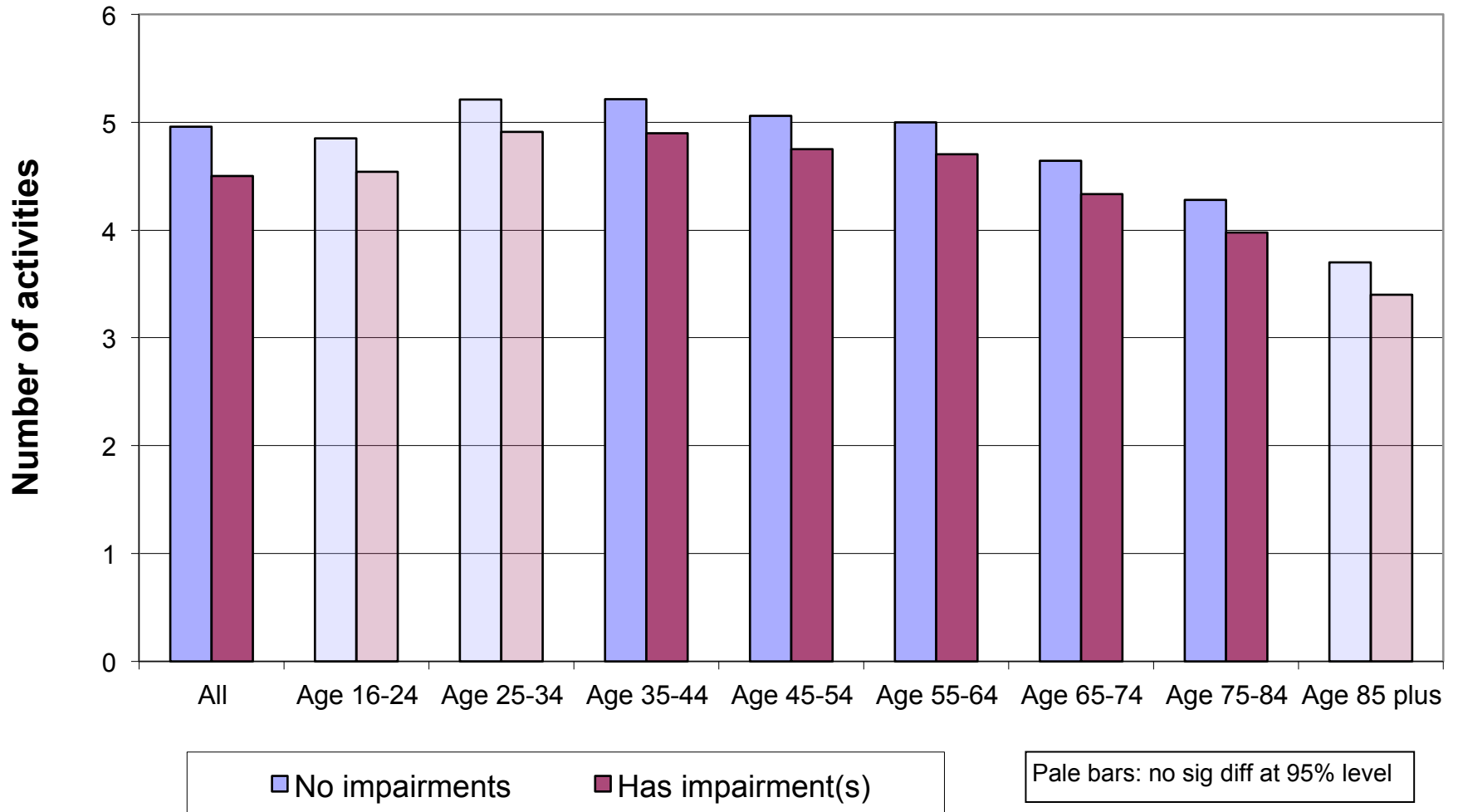
Life Opportunities Survey

- Nationally representative, longitudinal survey of disabled and non-disabled people in GB
- Run by ONS for Office for Disability Issues in Department for Work and Pensions
- Full Wave 1 data (2009 and 2010); wave 2 data now available
- Face-to-face interviews with 36,160 respondents aged 16+
- Innovations:
 - reference group of 60 disabled people involved at all stages of design
 - social model definition of disability (impairment; barriers to participation)
 - maximised accessibility of survey itself

Leisure and cultural activities

- Going on holiday
- Visiting friends
- Spending time with family
- Playing sport
- Charitable or voluntary work
- Going to a museum or place of historic interest (country home, castle etc)
- Going to the theatre, cinema or other arts activity
- Going to the library or archive

People with impairments are less likely to want to participate in leisure activities than people without impairments (except youngest and oldest)



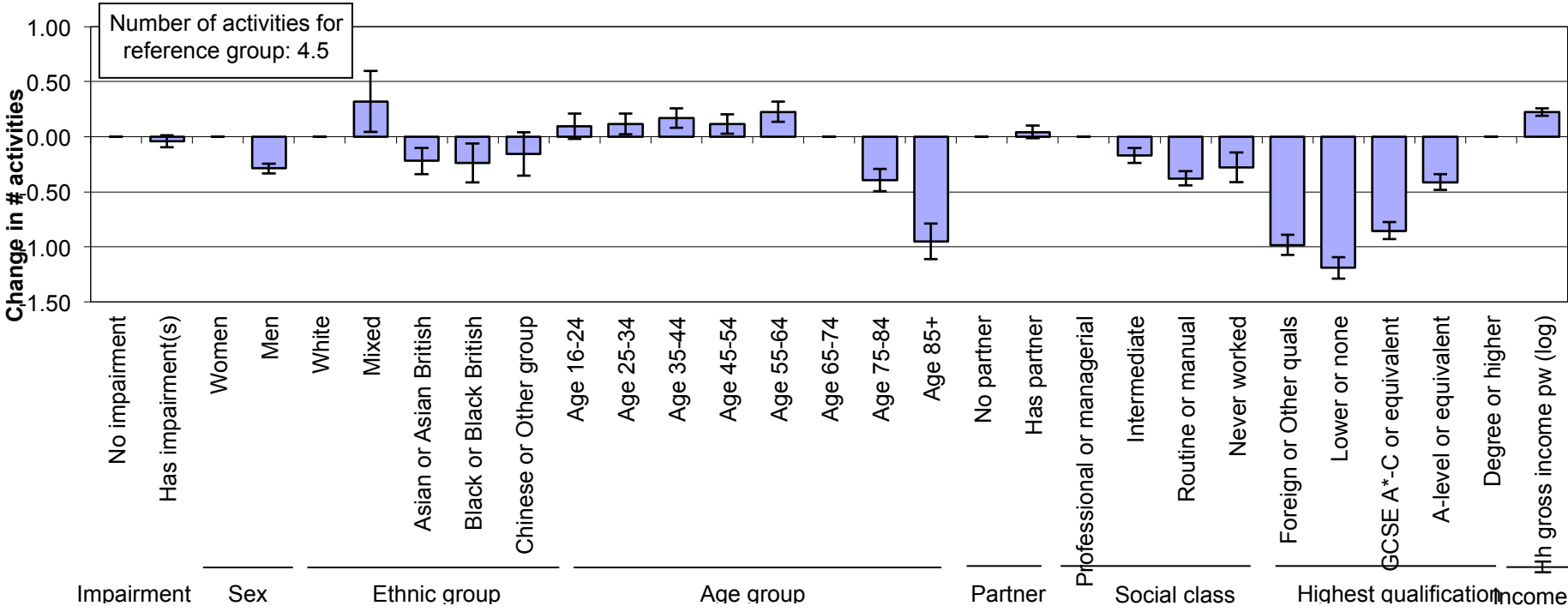
People with impairments are less likely to be interested in all these activities (controlling for age)

	% of whole sample who want to do this	Percentage point difference for people with impairments, controlling for age
Going on holiday	89	- 2.3 ***
Spending time with family	82	- 4.0 ***
Visiting friends	75	- 5.3 ***
Theatre, cinema or arts	67	- 4.4 ***
Museum or place of historic interest	54	- 3.4 ***
Playing sport	42	- 6.8 ***
Voluntary work	39	- 2.5 ***
Library	33	- 1.9 ***

*** statistically significant at 99% level

...but impairment no longer significant after controlling for education, social class and household income

Association between number of activities respondent would like to do and his/her characteristics



Restrictions

(1) Too busy/not enough time
(14) Caring responsibilities

} Other commitments

(2) Too expensive
(6) Lack of availability

} Cost / availability

(3) No-one to go with
(4) Fear of crime
(5) Fear of crowds

} Loneliness / fear

(7) Lack of help or assistance
(8) A health condition, illness or impairment
(9) A disability
(11) Difficulty with transport
(12) Difficulty getting into buildings
(13) Difficulty using facilities

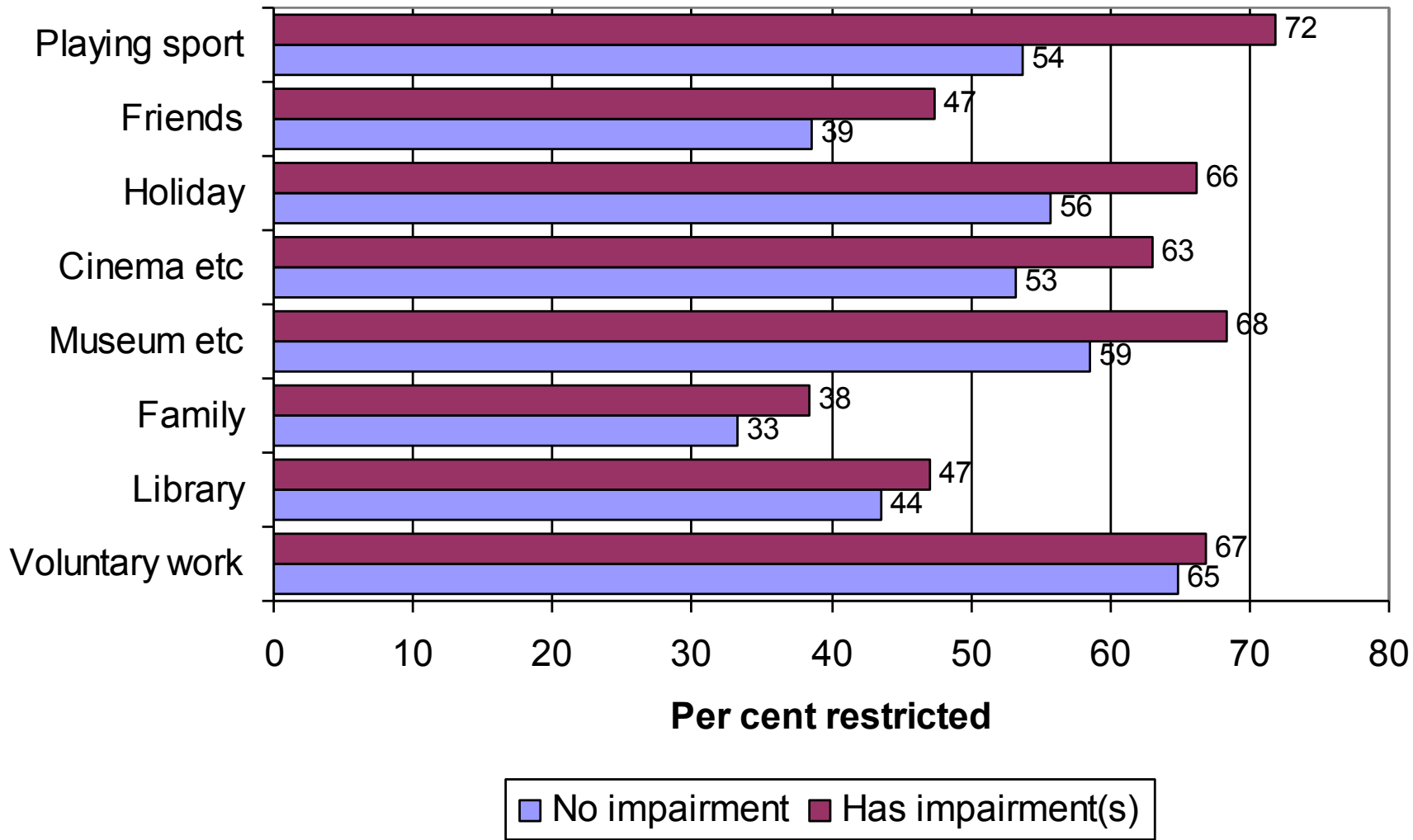
} Impairment / access-related

(10) Attitudes of other people
(15) Feel that I am not welcome

} Other people's attitudes

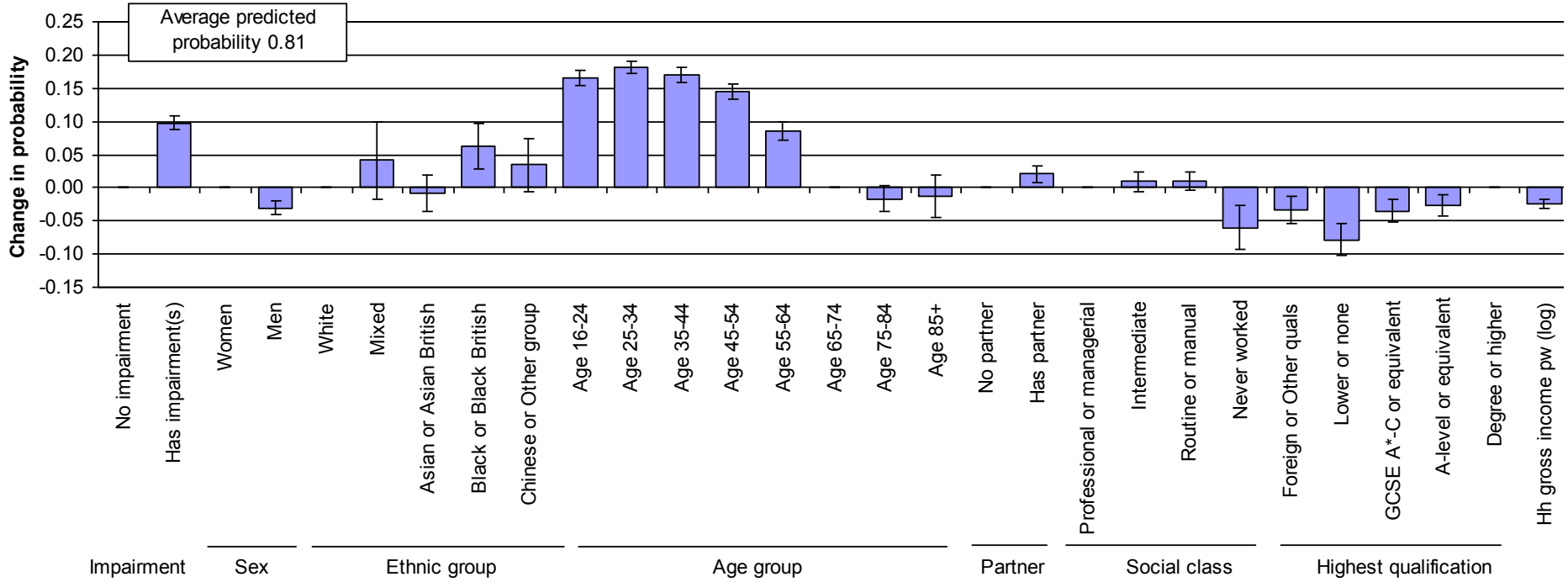
(17) Other

Percent restricted, by type of activity and impairment status

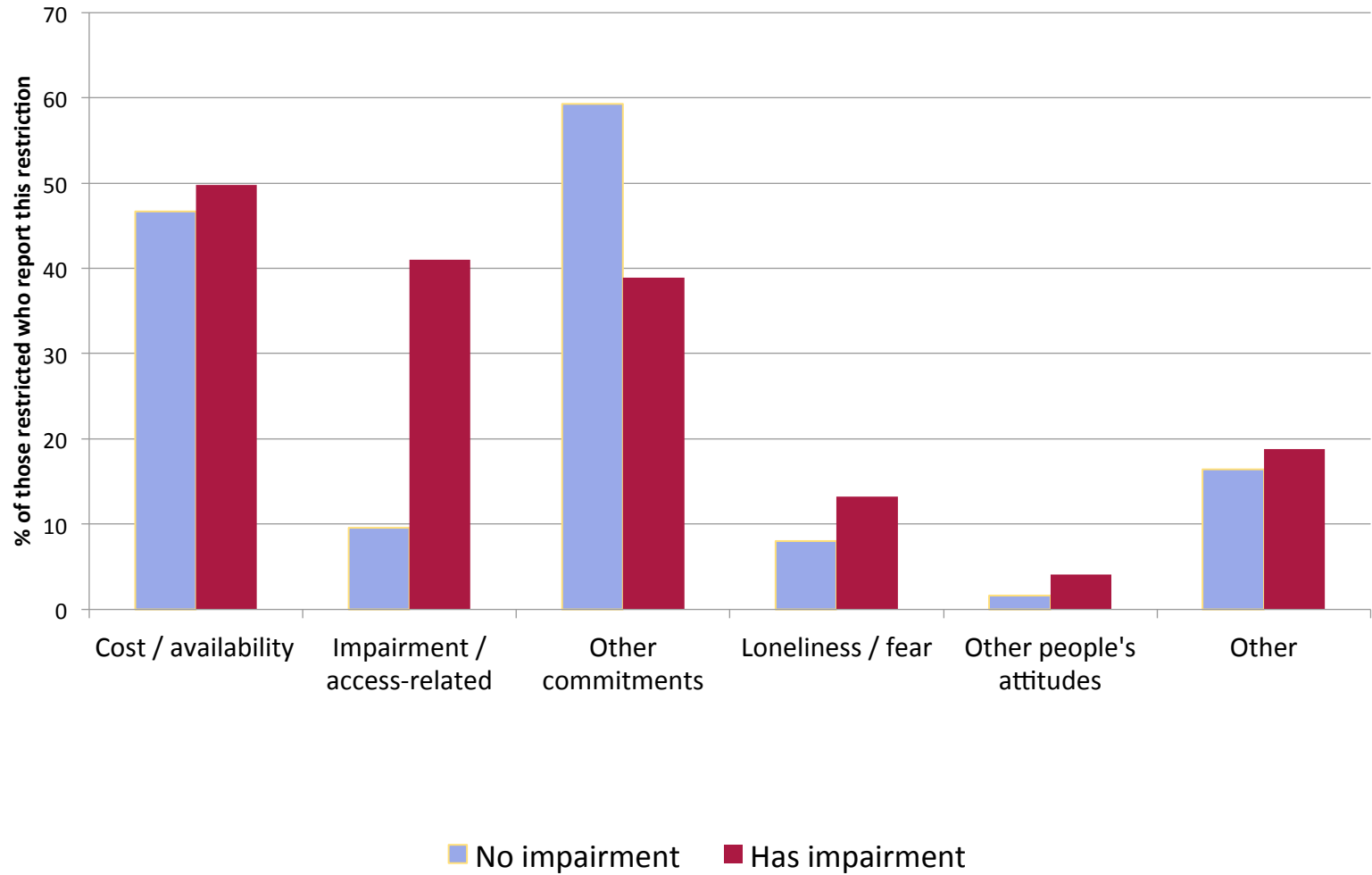


Ordered from largest to smallest percentage difference in restriction between impaired and non-impaired groups

Restriction in leisure activities: change in probability of 'being restricted' associated with each characteristic, holding other characteristics constant



Types of restriction, by impairment status



Back to Melanie

- She can't 'go to places' because:
 - she can't afford it
 - the places and transport aren't wheelchair accessible
 - she has to look after her mum
 - no-one is available to go with her
 - she fears she will be laughed at
 - the youth centre that organises trips is being shut down
- Limited "real freedom" (capability set)
- Impairment-related restrictions are a special case of a wider set of problems

Complementary frameworks

- Capability approach enables us to conceptualise social model in a more comprehensive framework
- Makes sense of shared and distinctive aspects of disability as a form of disadvantage
- Social model is grounded in lived experience
- Reflects struggles of disabled people for recognition of their entitlements over several decades