

# Functional Status

## Functional Status Interview: When to Ask Hypothetical Question

### 1. Difficulty "without help or aids"?

Many ppts will use an aid or receive help for an activity. Whether they have difficulty, and how much difficulty they have, without help or aids is often a hypothetical question for them.

### 2. Degree of difficulty when ppt doesn't do an activity for health reasons.

If a ppt doesn't do an activity for health reasons, we still ask how much difficulty she has doing the activity. She may still be able to do the activity, even though she doesn't. How much difficulty she has is a hypothetical question.

3. (proposed) A ppt is in a nursing home or other assisted living situation where certain services, like meals, are always provided. She may say she doesn't do an activity but that the reason is that it is done for her where she lives. She then answers 'no' to the question about whether this is due to a health reason.

Should we ask the hypothetical question: "If you had to do the activity, would you have difficulty?" If yes, "Is this due to a health problem?"

## STUDY OF OSTEOPOROTIC FRACTURES (V5)

### Functional Status Interview

The functional status battery for Visit 5 is exactly the same as Visits 3 and 4.

**General** These questions ask about difficulty and dependence in accomplishing selected activities. One frequent area of confusion regarding functional status measures is determining the degree of difficulty for activities that the subject accomplishes with help or with special aids. Therefore, following the format of other interview schedules, we will ask about difficulty when the respondent performs the activity by herself and without using special aids.

It is important that the participant answer the questions about degree of difficulty for the 13 specific activities when she does NOT use any aids or receive help. *In some cases, this may require asking the ppt a hypothetical question about whether she would have difficulty, or how much difficulty she would have, if she performed the activity without help or aids.*

Following the functional status questions, we ask participants about whether or not they use several different aids or devices to help them with certain things. *If they say that they use certain aids or have help, double check that they have answered any appropriate functional status questions about their difficulty as if they performed that activity by themselves and without that aid. For example, if a woman reports no difficulty walking 2-3 blocks outside unaided, then says she uses a cane or walker, or has help walking, then this might be an error.* Double check the responses with the participant. Some ladies may use a cane or other device as a precaution or safety, even if they don't really need it and can perform the activity unaided without difficulty. However, these types of circumstances will probably be uncommon and notes explaining the situation should be written in the margin of the functional status questionnaire. Please clarify this discrepancy with the participant while she is in the clinic. If necessary, write notes in the margins to explain the situation.

**Intro.** Read the introductory statement at the top of the page that tells the subject we are interested in how she does these activities by herself and without special aids.

**Part a** Be sure the subject understands that the questions are about difficulty she has by herself and without the use of special aids. Aids include a cane, walker, artificial limb, special eating appliances, special reaching appliances, grab bars, automatic lifts, etc. If she mentions aids or help, tell her there will be a question at the end about aids and appliances that she uses, and that you will also be asking about help that she gets for each activity.

*If a ppt always has help or always uses an aid for the activity, ask her if she would have difficulty without help and without using an aid. If she is unable to give an answer, or says she simply can't do the activity in that manner, then record that she "doesn't do"*

*the activity 'without help or aids'. Then ask part b to determine if this is because of a health or physical problem.*

If she volunteers that she can do an activity without difficulty only if she does it very slowly, ask if she has difficulty doing the activity at a speed that she would consider normal for her age. If she does have difficulty at a normal speed, mark "yes."

For multiple activity questions, like housework, where the level of difficulty may vary across activities use the following rules of thumb:

- i) If she doesn't do one or two activities for non health reasons (e.g. wash windows) but has no difficulty with most others, then code as "no difficulty".
- ii) If she is unable to do some activities but has no difficulty with most others, code as "some difficulty".
- iii) If she is unable to do some activities and has difficulty with most others, code as "much difficulty".
- iv) If she is unable to do most activities, code as "unable".

- Part b If a participant reports difficulty with an activity or reports that she doesn't do the activity, ask part b about the reason for the difficulty/inability.

*In the unusual situation that a participant who resides in a nursing home or assisted living environment says they don't do an activity because the service is provided, but that it is not due to a health or physical problem, ask "Would you have any difficulty if you [ACTIVITY] by yourself and without special aids?" If the answer is yes, we will assume this is due to a health reason so, record "yes" for part b and continue.*

- Parts c-h Follow-up questions in parts c through h ask about the degree and duration of difficulty, dependence on others for the activity, and the symptoms and conditions causing the difficulty.

*For items 1 (walking) and 2 (climb up 10 steps), ask parts c through h for all subjects with difficulty or who don't do the activity, whether or not they say it is due to a health or physical problem. The underlying assumption is that if they don't walk 2-3 blocks or don't climb 10 steps then it is due to a health problem.*

*For items 3 (meals) through 13 (in and out of car), ask parts c-h only if the answer is "yes" or "DK" to the question about whether difficulty or not doing an activity is due to a health or physical problem.*

*If a ppt doesn't do an activity (items 1 and 2), or doesn't do an activity for health reasons (items 3 to 13), ask "How much difficulty would you have if you [ACTIVITY] by yourself and without special aids?" If she cannot answer, or has great difficulty answering, this question record that she is "unable to do it."*

*For the participants who are unable to do an activity, continue to ask the remaining questions referring to their "inability", instead of their 'difficulty'.*

- Part d Part d asks how long the person has had difficulty or been unable to do the activity. If less than 3 months, enter 0.0 yrs. If 3-6 months, enter 0.5 yrs. If 7-11 months enter 1.0 yrs. For duration longer than one year, use the same rounding conventions for months (e.g. 1 year and 7 months = 2.0 yrs). Rounding conventions are listed on the form.
- Part e Part e asks whether help is received for the activity. If a person receives help from another person for the activity, then ask the second half of the question concerning whether the help they receive is paid help or volunteer help.
- Part f For all those who report receiving help, ask part f about how long they have received help for the activity.
- Parts g, h These two questions ask the subject to attribute their functional problems to specific symptoms and conditions. The symptoms are listed on Card A and the conditions on Card B. The questions ask about the main symptoms and conditions.

SHOW THE SUBJECT THE CARDS. If she has difficulty reading them, read the choices to her.

If the subject wants to choose more than one symptom or more than one condition, ask her to choose the one which overall she feels is the most important reason that she has difficulty.

Part g: stiffness in the leg should be coded as #4 - pain/discomfort not as weakness/paralysis.

Parts g and h are not conditional on the answer to part e.

- Aids Ask the question on the last page about aids used to perform the activity. Ask about each aid separately. For positive reports of aids that could be used for activities asked about in the functional status section, double check with the participant that she answered the functional status questions about difficulty when she DOES NOT use the aid.