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The Role of Disability and Socioeconomic Status in Shaping Likelihood of Crime Victimization: A Regression Analysis

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Abstract

People with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of both violent and property crime victimization, yet the intersection of disability and socioeconomic disadvantage remains poorly understood. Data from the 2023 National Crime Victimization Survey are used to examine rates of property and violent crime victimization across disability and socioeconomic status groups. Multivariable models adjusted for age, race/ethnicity, and sex compute the odds of victimization. We use marginal effects to estimate the predicted probabilities of crime victimization for each demographic category. After adjusting for age, race/ethnicity, and sex, individuals who were both disabled and socioeconomically disadvantaged had significantly greater odds of victimization (2.9 for property crime; 4.9 for violent crime) than those who were neither disabled nor socioeconomically disadvantaged. Disability is an important social determinant of crime victimization. Socioeconomic disadvantage further increases the likelihood of victimization among people with disabilities, suggesting that the combined effects of disability and poverty create heightened vulnerability to both property and violent crime. Public health efforts should prioritize prevention strategies and victim services that address the needs of populations experiencing multiple forms of social and economic disadvantage.

Keywords: disability; crime victimization; socioeconomic status; intersectionality

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1. Introduction

1.1. Victimization Rates by Disability Status

Adults with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of criminal victimization relative to their nondisabled peers, a disparity documented across multiple datasets and crime typologies. Using 2017–2019 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data, Harrell [1] found that the rate of violent victimization among people with disabilities was nearly four times that of people without disabilities. Codina et al. [2] found a higher rate of lifetime victimization within a sample of adults with intellectual disability, with 96.9% of participants experiencing at least one form of victimization, and some participants experiencing 13 or more incidents of victimization throughout the lifespan. Latvala et al. [3] and Liasidou and Gregoriou [4] likewise found a higher cumulative rate of violent victimization across the lifespan for adults with disability. Collectively, this evidence demonstrates that disability is an important social determinant of victimization.

Despite consistent evidence of heightened victimization risk, less is known about how disability intersects with other forms of social disadvantage to shape vulnerability to crime. The mechanisms underlying higher victimization rates among people with disabilities

remain poorly understood. Disability frequently co-occurs with other marginalized social positions, including low socioeconomic status, which may independently increase exposure to victimization. Examining disability in isolation may therefore overlook important differences in risk among subgroups of people with disabilities.

Existing research has largely focused on specific forms of victimization, particularly sexual or gender-based violence [2,5–9], or specific disability populations such as individuals with intellectual disabilities [10–12] or autism [13]. Consequently, there is limited population-level evidence examining how disability-related likelihood of victimization varies across socioeconomic groups or whether particular forms of crime disproportionately affect socially and economically disadvantaged people with disabilities.

Bauer [14] highlighted the methodological challenges of applying intersectionality within quantitative health research, including how multiple social positions are conceptualized, measured, and modeled. Nevertheless, an intersectional approach is critical for identifying groups facing compounded disadvantages and for informing more targeted prevention and intervention strategies.

1.2. Victimization Rates by Socioeconomic Status

The literature examining socioeconomic status (SES), disability, and victimization is diffuse. One challenge is the lack of consensus regarding how SES should be measured. SES measures are often constructed using some combination of individual or household income, educational attainment, and occupation, although factors such as housing characteristics, participation in assistance or benefit programs, and household composition can provide a more comprehensive picture of socioeconomic position [15–17].

A substantial body of research demonstrates that disabled people are more likely to have low incomes and face additional costs associated with disability [18–23]. Other studies have documented relationships between neighborhood disadvantage and likelihood of victimization [24–32]. Research has also explored associations between victimization and demographic characteristics such as race, sex, age, and geographic location [33–38]. Disability status has received comparably less attention in the United States, though it has been explored in international contexts [39–42].

The NCVS has multiple potential measures of SES. Berzofsky, et al. [43] explored strategies for operationalizing SES in the NCVS, examining a variety of single measure and composite approaches used in crime victimization research and other federal surveys as well as providing guidelines for creating a SES index for NCVS data.

1.3. Intersectional Analysis of Victimization Rates

Aggregate comparisons between disabled and nondisabled populations can obscure meaningful heterogeneity within the disability community itself. Examining variation in victimization rates by socioeconomic status may improve understanding of how risk is distributed among people with disabilities. Socioeconomic status, whether operationalized as family income, poverty status, educational attainment, or employment status, has been shown to independently predict victimization rates. However, the combination of disability and socioeconomic disadvantage may further increase likelihood of victimization because of factors such as differential exposure to high-risk environments and unequal access to protective resources.

There remains a significant gap in understanding the combined effects of disability status and SES on crime victimization rates. This challenge is partly attributable to the lack of standardization in how SES is defined or measured. Researchers commonly construct SES measures using indicators such as income, education, and occupation [15,16,44]. SES may also be conceptualized more broadly as access to wealth, power, and resources, including

poverty status, enrollment in public assistance programs, or residence in government-subsidized housing [45]. While the NCVS includes measures of household income and educational attainment, each presents with certain limitations. Educational attainment may be less informative for younger respondents who have not yet completed their education, while household income may obscure important differences between disabled people living independently and those supported spouses or family members.

Social networks within highly disadvantaged communities may also contribute to victimization risk, particularly as it relates to violent crime. Individuals living in disadvantaged environments are more likely to have social ties to others exposed to or involved in violent crime [46,47]. This pattern does not reflect a cultural pathology; rather, concentrated disadvantage may increase exposure to violence through network proximity. Such exposure may elevate rate of victimization independently of individual behavior and may have implications for both low-SES populations and disabled people, particularly those who occupy both social positions. A deeper understanding of these relationships could help inform crime prevention efforts and identify communities most likely to benefit from intervention.

People with disabilities may also face additional constraints in their ability to relocate or alter their social environments [48]. A need for access to accessible housing, employment opportunities, transportation, and community resources may limit residential and social mobility. When combined with economic disadvantage, these constraints may further increase exposure to environments associated with greater likelihood of victimization.

This context prompts the following research questions:

RQ1: Are disability status and socioeconomic disadvantage each independently associated with the likelihood of property and violent victimization, controlling for other known demographic risk factors?

RQ2: Do adults who are both disabled and socioeconomically disadvantaged experience higher odds of victimization than adults with either characteristic alone or with neither?

RQ3: Is the combined association of disability and socioeconomic disadvantage greater than would be expected from their separate associations?

Through these analyses, we examine how exposure to crime among people with disabilities varies across intersecting social and economic positions.

To answer these questions, we examine victimization rates among people with disabilities and people of lower socioeconomic status relative to other populations identified as in the literature as being at elevated rate of victimization, including individuals who are not White, women, and younger adults. Second, we examine the odds of victimization among people who are both disabled and socioeconomically disadvantaged relative to other population groups. Third, we calculated predicted probabilities of being a crime victim for each demographic category of interest. Through this analysis, we demonstrate how exposure to crime for disabled people varies according to their intersecting social and economic positions.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Data

This study examines data from the 2023 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), a nationally representative, multi-stage longitudinal survey administered to U.S. residents aged 12 and older. The NCVS collects self-reported information about personal and property crime experiences, including attempts and threats, over a rolling six-month reference period. A key strength of the survey is its capacity to capture crimes that go unreported to law enforcement, as well as detailed respondent characteristics (such as disability and measures of socioeconomic status) which are typically absent from administrative crime records. For

these reasons, the Department of Justice designates the NCVS as its primary data source for measuring crime exposure in the United States [49].

The NCVS employs a multi-mode design in which geographic units are sampled first, followed by housing units and group quarters; all household members aged 12 or older are then eligible for interview [50]. Household-level participation in 2023 was 63.1%, with an individual-level response rate of 82.3% [51]. To distinguish from the unique experiences of youth, our focus is on adult victimization. Because we examine socioeconomic status as a primary measure of interest, we also restrict our analysis to those age 26 or older. We selected this age cutoff for two primary reasons: First, because socioeconomic status is closely related to educational attainment, it is important to identify an age at which one could have completed a college degree when following a traditional education path. The U.S. Census Bureau generally uses age 25 and older for examining educational attainment [52]. Additionally, adults must leave their parents' health insurance plan by age 26, which is another important indicator of socioeconomic status [53]. For these reasons, analyses were conservatively restricted to respondents aged 26 and older with complete data on disability status, socioeconomic status, and victimization, yielding an analytic sample of 199,034 individuals [54].

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Crime Victimization

The outcomes of interest are (1) any property criminal victimization or (2) any violent criminal victimization in the prior year. Respondents are screened about whether they experienced a range of crimes in the past six months. Types of property victimizations include: burglary, trespassing, motor vehicle theft, or other types of theft. Violent victimization includes rape, sexual assault, aggravated assault, or simple assault [55]. Because NCVS participants are re-interviewed at six-month intervals, responses across two interview waves are combined to yield annual victimization indicators. Some individuals may be victims of both property and violent crimes, sometimes as part of a single incident and other times as part of multiple incidents.

2.2.2. Disability

Disability status is measured using the standard six-item sequence included in the NCVS and other federal surveys, assessing functional difficulty in the domains of vision, hearing, cognition, ambulation, self-care, and independent living [1]. Respondents reporting difficulty in any one domain are classified as having a disability; those reporting no difficulty across all six items are classified as non-disabled.

2.2.3. Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Following NCVS-specific recommendations by Berzofsky et al. [43], we created a three-category measures of SES, collapsed from an index ranging in value from 0 to 8, with 0 being the lowest possible level of SES and 8 being the highest. One point is added if an individual is a homeowner and one point is added if the individual was employed over the past six months. For educational attainment, a point is added for having a high school diploma; two points if earned a bachelor's degree; and three points if a higher level of education was attained (e.g., master's, professional, or doctorate). Points are added if household income is above the federal poverty level (one point if 101 to 200% above; two points if 201 to 400% above, and three points if 401% or higher). Note that poverty level was assessed by comparing household income to total number of people in the household using 2023 U.S. Census Bureau poverty threshold [56]. Because household level data was captured on the instrument categorically rather than continuously, in instances where the range of income

spanned multiple poverty thresholds, we utilized the category's midpoint. Note that NCVS imputes missing values for income.

Approximately 1.5% of cases were missing one of these SES indicators (either education or employment). Analysis of these missing cases indicated that they were evenly distributed across age and victimization categories. Their exclusion is accounted for in the reporting of sample size above. In our collapsed SES measure, scale values of 1 through 3 are counted as low SES; values of 4 through 6 are middle SES; 7 and 8 are high SES.

2.2.4. Covariates

Sociodemographic covariates known to be associated with higher victimization rates are included as controls. Age is captured continuously based on self-report and included in our analyses in six 9-year categories (26 to 35; 36 to 45; 46 to 55; 56 to 65; 66 to 74; 75 and older). Race and ethnicity are captured using five categories derived from respondents' self-reported racial identification and Hispanic origin: non-Hispanic White alone; non-Hispanic Black or African American alone; non-Hispanic Asian alone; non-Hispanic other or multiracial; and Hispanic of any race. Sex is recorded in dichotomous categories. For each of these variables, adjustments are made for nonresponse on the public use file and these imputed values are used in our analyses.

2.3. Analytic Strategy

Descriptive statistics characterize the sample and bivariable victimization patterns across demographic groups separately for property crimes and violent crimes. Logistic regression models are then used to estimate the odds of the two victimization types associated with disability status, socioeconomic status, and other key covariates [57], with average marginal effects calculated to facilitate interpretation of group differences on the probability scale. All analyses were conducted in Stata v.18 with appropriate complex sample weights applied, as recommended [58].

3. Results

Table 1 shows the percentage of the population in each demographic category along with the unweighted number of cases in each category. Just under 14% of the population aged 26 and older reported a disability, consistent with estimates reported by the adult population in the American Community Survey for the same time period [59]. Also consistent with other federal surveys, the disability population has a higher representation among older age categories (23.0% are 66 to 74; 30.1% are aged 75 or older compared to 13.4% and 6.1%, respectively, for the nondisabled population).

With respect to socioeconomic status, the no disability population is somewhat evenly distributed between low (19.4%) and high (22.9%). However, the disabled population is substantially overrepresented among the socioeconomically disadvantaged category (42.3%) and just 7.8% of the disabled population aged 26 and over are considered high SES. This is largely due to the lower education (16.8% have less than a high school diploma) and employment rates (75% were not working over the last six months) of those with disabilities. Homeownership rates for those with disabilities are similar to the overall population (67.2% compared to 70.5% overall); this is largely related to the age distribution of those with disabilities. Because of the relationship between homeownership, employment, and victimization to age as well as disability, age remains an important covariate in subsequent analysis.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics aged 26 and older, 2023 (weighted percentage; unweighted number of cases) (n = 216,852).

	Overall		No Disability		Disability	
	***n* (unwtd)**	**% (wtd)**	***n* (unwtd)**	**% (wtd)**	***n* (unwtd)**	**% (wtd)**
Total	195,455	100.0	166,046	13.8	29,409	86.2
Socioeconomic Status						
Low	42,238	22.4	30,444	19.4	11,794	42.3
Middle	110,475	56.7	95,901	57.8	14,574	50.0
High	49,990	20.9	38,746	22.9	2244	7.8
Age						
26 to 35	32,039	20.3	30,266	22.3	1773	8.4
36 to 45	34,886	19.3	32,792	21.0	2094	8.7
46 to 55	32,870	17.7	30,049	18.8	2821	10.8
56 to 65	37,703	18.5	32,429	18.4	5274	19.0
66 to 74	34,582	14.7	27,249	13.4	7333	23.0
75 or older	23,375	9.4	13,261	6.1	10,114	30.1
Race/ethnicity						
Non-Hispanic White	135,199	62.8	113,151	61.8	22,047	69.1
Non-Hispanic Black	19,307	11.8	16,277	11.7	3030	12.0
Non-Hispanic Asian	10,483	6.8	9772	7.3	711	3.6
Non-Hispanic Other	3669	2.2	2931	2.0	738	3.2
Hispanic (any race)	26,797	16.5	23,914	17.2	2883	12.1
Sex						
Male	92,396	48.7	78,962	49.0	13,434	46.7
Female	103,059	51.3	87,084	51.0	15,975	53.3
Components of SES						
Household income						
Under $30k	29,411	15.0	20,611	12.6	8800	15.0
$30–50k	33,518	17.1	27,075	16.4	6443	17.1
$50–75k	33,792	17.2	28,914	17.4	4878	17.2
$75–100k	28,213	14.5	24,853	15.0	3360	14.5
$100–150k	33,245	17.0	30,075	18.0	3170	17.0
$150k+	37,276	19.1	34,518	20.6	2758	19.1
Education						
Less than High school	18,202	9.7	13,493	8.6	4709	16.8
High school diploma	98,715	5.0	81,259	48.8	17,456	59.2
Bachelor's degree	48,033	24.9	43,607	26.5	4426	14.9
Advanced degree	30,505	15.2	27,687	16.2	2818	9.2
Employment status						
Not emp last 6 mos	78,014	36.2	55,292	30.0	22,722	75.1
Employed last 6 mos	117,441	63.8	110,754	70.0	6687	24.9
Housing tenure						
Rent/other	51,459	29.5	42,360	29.0	9099	32.8
Own home/mortgage	143,996	70.5	123,686	71.0	20,310	67.2

Table 2 displays the bivariate relationship between victimization and various demographic characteristics, shown separately for property and violent crime. The first columns show that 3.54% of people live in a household that experienced a property crime. This rate is significantly higher for those with disabilities (5.09%, $p < 0.001$); those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged (4.51%, $p < 0.001$); the youngest category (26 to 35: 4.83%, $p < 0.001$); and those who are non-Hispanic and a race other than White, Black, or Asian (6.52%, $p < 0.001$).

Table 2. Percentage of people aged 26+ in the U.S. reporting property crime and violent crime victimization in the last year by demographic category, 2023.

	Property Crime			Violent Crime		
	%	std. error	$p > \|t\|$	%	std. error	$p > \|t\|$
Total	3.54	0.07		1.08	0.04	
Disability Status			***			***
Not Disabled	3.29	0.06		0.94	0.04	
Disabled	5.09	0.22		1.91	0.16	
Socioeconomic Status			***			***
Low	4.51	0.19		1.58	0.11	
Middle	3.23	0.08		0.91	0.05	
High	3.21	0.13		0.93	0.08	
Age			***			***
26 to 35	4.83	0.18		1.57	0.11	
36 to 45	4.30	0.18		1.27	0.10	
46 to 55	3.78	0.17		1.27	0.10	
56 to 65	3.12	0.14		0.96	0.09	
66 to 74	2.26	0.12		0.68	0.07	
75 or older	1.57	0.12		0.12	0.03	
Race/ethnicity			***			***
Non-Hispanic White	3.12	0.08		1.04	0.06	
Non-Hispanic Black	4.69	0.28		1.35	0.16	
Non-Hispanic Asian	2.94	0.20		0.56	0.10	
Non-Hispanic Other	6.52	0.61		2.78	0.44	
Hispanic (any race)	4.19	0.18		1.00	0.10	
Sex						
Male	3.52	0.10		1.01	0.05	
Female	3.56	0.09		1.14	0.06	

*** $p < 0.001$.

There are similar patterns for victims of violent crime, though the incidence (and therefore variation) is lower. Overall, 1.08% of people 26 and older were victims of a violent crime in the last 12 months. While the percentage of those with a disability (1.91%) is only one percentage point higher than the nondisabled population (0.94%), the rate is twice as high. Among those in the lowest socioeconomic status category, 1.58% were victims of a violent crime.

Table 3 moves beyond the bivariate relationship by including all demographic covariates in models that predict the odds of property and violent crime victimization separately. In the first column of each dependent variable, we include SES and disability separately. The second model shows the interaction of disability by lowest SES status. For property crime (columns 1 and 2), we note that age is an important control. The youngest adults (aged 26 to 35) have 4.28 higher odds of living in a household that experienced property crime compared to the oldest (those 75 or older). Those who are Black, non-Hispanic (1.36, $p < 0.001$); Other races (not White, Black, or Asian), non-Hispanic (1.72, $p < 0.001$), and Hispanic (1.62, $p < 0.01$) had significantly higher odds of property crime victimization compared to those who are White, non-Hispanic. After controlling for these characteristics, we found that those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged experienced 1.28 times the odds ($p < 0.001$) of being in households that experienced property crimes compared to higher SES individuals and that those who were disabled had 2.08 times the odds ($p < 0.001$) compared to nondisabled people. The second model considers the interaction of disability and SES status. Compared to those who are both not in the lowest SES category and not disabled, all three groups experienced higher odds of property victimization: those who are not disabled but are economically disadvantaged had 1.188 higher odds ($p < 0.001$); those

who are disabled but not economically disadvantaged had 1.83 increased odds ($p < 0.001$). However, those who were both disabled and socioeconomically disadvantaged had almost three times higher odds of being victims of a property crime (OR = 2.89; $p < 0.001$).

Table 3. Odds ratios (and standard errors) for demographic characteristics predicting victimization in the last year (ages 26+, 2023).

	Property Crime				Violent Crime			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	OR (SE)	$p > \|t\|$	OR (SE)	$p > \|t\|$	OR (SE)	$p > \|t\|$	OR (SE)	$p > \|t\|$
Disability (ref = not disabled)	2.08 (0.12)	***			2.87 (0.28)	***		
SES Disadv. (ref = mid/high SES)	1.28 (0.07)	***			1.58 (0.13)	***		
Disability x SES Disadv. (ref = no disability, not SES disadv.)								
Disabled, not SES disadv.			1.83 (0.13)	***			2.40 (0.31)	***
Not disabled, Low SES			1.19 (0.07)	**			1.41 (0.15)	**
Disabled and Low SES			2.89 (0.22)	***			4.95 (0.61)	***
Race (ref = NH White)								
Black, non-Hispanic	1.36 (0.09)	***	1.36 (0.09)	***	1.07 (0.16)		1.07 (0.12)	
Asian, non-Hispanic	0.92 (0.07)		0.92 (0.07)		0.53 (0.10)	***	0.53 (0.08)	***
Other, non-Hispanic	1.72 (0.19)	***	1.73 (0.18)	***	2.04 (0.34)	***	2.05 (0.36)	***
Hispanic	1.62 (0.06)	**	1.17 (0.06)	**	0.76 (0.09)	**	0.78 (0.08)	**
Age (ref 75+)								
26 to 35	4.28 (0.42)	***	4.27 (0.42)	***	23.54 (5.90)	***	23.44 (5.25)	***
36 to 45	3.84 (0.39)	***	3.81 (0.38)	***	19.53 (5.17)	***	19.32 (4.17)	***
46 to 55	3.29 (0.39)	***	3.23 (0.34)	***	18.73 (4.80)	***	18.50 (4.07)	***
56 to 65	2.54 (0.26)	***	2.52 (0.26)	***	12.30 (3.16)	***	12.16 (2.62)	***
66 to 74	1.71 (0.16)	***	1.71 (0.16)	***	7.42 (1.82)	***	7.39 (1.60)	***
Sex = Female (ref = male)	1.02 (0.04)		1.02 (0.04)		1.14 (0.08)		1.14 (0.08)	
Constant	0.01 (0.00)	***	0.01 (0.00)	***	0.001 (0.00)	***	0.001 (0.00)	***

** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

The final two columns of Table 3 show the odds of violent victimization. We note a much more pronounced effect of all demographic variables, particularly age. Those who are aged 26 to 35 have over 23 times increased odds of violent victimization compared to those aged 75 or older ($p < 0.001$). Other characteristics have patterns similar to that of property crime victimization odds. Those who are in the lowest SES category have 1.58 times the odds of being a violent crime victim ($p < 0.001$) and those with a disability have 2.87 times the odds ($p < 0.001$) relative to those not in these categories and controlling for all other demographic characteristics shown. As model 2 shows, exploring the relationship between disability and SES provides important insights. Compared to those who are neither disabled nor socioeconomically disadvantaged, those who are low SES but not disabled have 1.41 increased odds ($p < 0.01$) of victimization. The increased odds of those who are disabled but not socioeconomically disadvantaged is 2.4 ($p < 0.001$) and for those who are both low SES and disabled, the odds are almost 5 times that of those who are neither (OR = 4.95; $p < 0.001$).

These results provide an answer to RQ1: that disability status and socioeconomic disadvantage each are independently associated with an increased odds of portery and violent victimization (Model 1 for each dependent variable), and to RQ2: that those who are both disabled and socioeconomically disadvantaged have significantly higher odds of victimization than adults with either characteristic alone or with neither (Model 2 for each dependent variable).

Figure 1 uses the second model to estimate marginal effects of each crime victimization type. The predicted probability of being a crime victim for each combination of SES disadvantage and disability category, while controlling for age, race/ethnicity, and sex, is displayed in this graph.

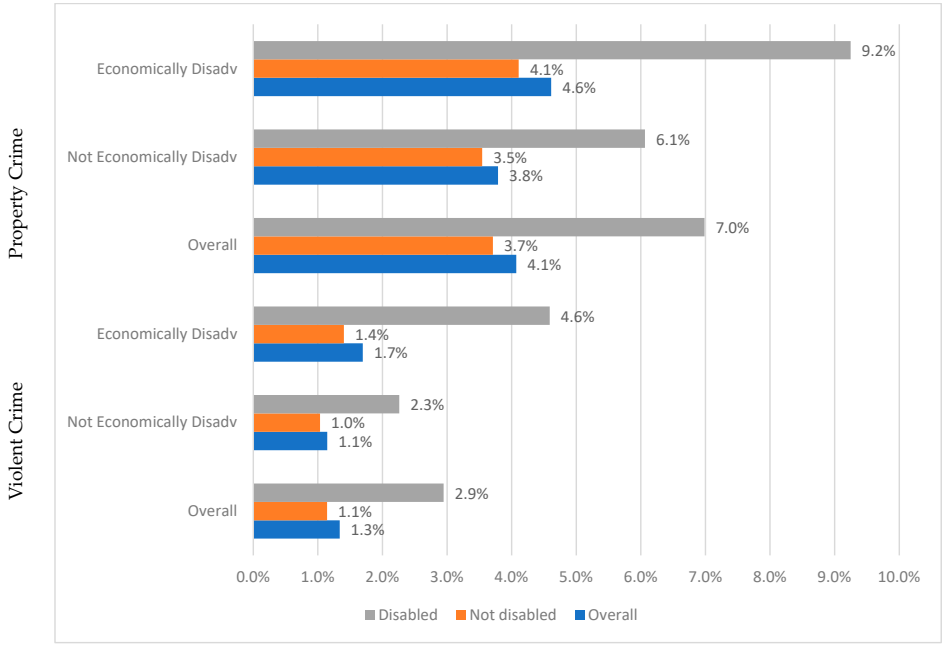


Figure 1. Predicted probability of property and violent crime victimization, by disability and SES category, controlling for age, race/ethnicity, and gender.

What is notable about these predicted probabilities is the substantially higher rate for those who are both low SES and disabled, both in terms of larger probabilities and in terms of their size relative to other categories. Among those who already experience a higher rate of property crime due to being socioeconomically disadvantaged, those with disabilities have more than twice the predicted probability (9.2%) compared to those without disabilities (4.1%). For violent crime, among the lowest SES group, the disabled population has more than three times the predicted probability of being a victim (4.6% compared to 1.4%), even after controlling for age. We note that likelihood is higher for people with disabilities across the board. It appears that socioeconomic disadvantage is not as protective for those with disabilities as it is for those who are not, both for property and violent crimes. These predicted probabilities provide an answer to RQ3: the combined association of disability and socioeconomic disadvantage is greater than would be expected from their separate associations.

4. Discussion

Using nationally representative NCVS data, this study found that adults (aged 26+) with disabilities experience substantially higher odds of both property and violent crime victimization than adults without disabilities. Socioeconomic disadvantage was also independently

associated with increased victimization rates. Most importantly, the combination of disability and socioeconomic disadvantage was associated with the highest rates of victimization. Adults who were both disabled and socioeconomically disadvantaged experienced nearly three times the odds of property victimization and nearly five times the odds of violent victimization relative to adults who were neither disabled nor socioeconomically disadvantaged. Predicted probabilities further demonstrated that higher likelihood of victimization was concentrated among individuals occupying both marginalized social positions.

These findings contribute to a growing body of literature documenting elevated victimization rates among people with disabilities. However, they also demonstrate that the disability population is not homogeneous. Aggregate comparisons between disabled and nondisabled populations may mask important variation in likelihood. While disability and socioeconomic disadvantage each increase the likelihood of victimization, their co-occurrence is associated with especially high levels of victimization. This pattern is consistent with an intersectional perspective, suggesting that likelihood of victimization is shaped not only by disability status itself but also by the broader social and economic contexts in which people live.

The findings have important public health implications. Exposure to crime and violence is associated with a range of adverse physical, psychological, and social outcomes, including injury, trauma, reduced community participation, and poorer overall health. Preventing victimization among people with disabilities should therefore be viewed as a public health priority rather than exclusively a criminal justice concern. Public health interventions aimed at reducing violence and improving community safety should explicitly consider disability status and recognize that economically disadvantaged disabled adults may face particularly elevated risk.

Several mechanisms may contribute to these observed differences. People with disabilities are more likely to experience economic hardship, depend on limited social and community resources, and face barriers to relocating to safer neighborhoods or accessing protective supports. Individuals living in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities may also have greater exposure to environmental and social conditions associated with higher victimization rates. While the present analysis cannot directly test these mechanisms, the findings suggest that future research should examine how neighborhood conditions, social networks, housing stability, service access, and economic insecurity jointly influence victimization among people with disabilities.

The association between disability and victimization remained after controlling for socioeconomic status. This suggests that there is something unique about disability that places people at risk of victimization independent of financial resources. Exposure to crime may be shaped by proximity to motivated offenders and absence of protective social networks, both of which are risk factors more common among the disability population, who may be more likely to live in high-crime (low socioeconomic status) communities, and who are more likely to have to rely on low paying careworkers to support daily care needs. This sustained proximity to potential offenders, including paid caregivers and family members, may result in an increased victimization risk because of the perpetrator's control of essential assistance [60]. In fact, the estimates in this analysis, drawn from survey self-reports, may underestimate victimization. Further, physical, sensory, cognitive, or communication impairments can reduce a person's ability to detect, avoid, resist, or escape a threatening situation, and offenders may perceive people with disabilities as easier targets or as less likely to report or be believed [61]. Such potential vulnerability is the result of social and physical environments that are not designed with broad needs in mind.

Several limitations should be noted. First, the cross-sectional approach does not permit causal inference or allow us to identify temporal ordering. That is, victimization may

contribute to disability onset or economic hardship, just as disability and disadvantage may increase exposure to victimization. Second, the NCVS excludes institutionalized populations and relies on self- or proxy-reported disability measures that do not capture the type, severity, or onset of impairment, and it may undercount victimization perpetrated by caregivers or other people on whom respondents depend. Finally, the NCVS does not include measures of the mechanisms discussed above (e.g., neighborhood conditions, social networks, caregiving arrangements), so these pathways remain untested. Each of these potential explanations for increased rates of victimization among people with disabilities should be investigated in future studies.

From a policy perspective, these findings support targeted prevention efforts in communities with high concentrations of poverty and disability. Health and human service systems, disability service organizations, victim assistance programs, and public health agencies may benefit from greater coordination to identify and support individuals at heightened risk. Screening for victimization, strengthening community-based supports, improving access to safe and affordable housing, and reducing economic hardship may all represent important strategies for reducing victimization-related health disparities among people with disabilities.

5. Conclusions

This study demonstrates the value of applying an intersectional lens to crime victimization research. Adults with disabilities face elevated victimization rates, but elevated rates are not evenly distributed within the disability community. Socioeconomically disadvantaged adults with disabilities represent a particularly vulnerable population, highlighting the need for public health and policy responses that address both disability-related and economic sources of inequality. Prevention programs should include accessible formats, with attention paid to the economic context in which individuals are living.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript:

NCVS	National Crime Victimization Survey
SES	Socio-economic status

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