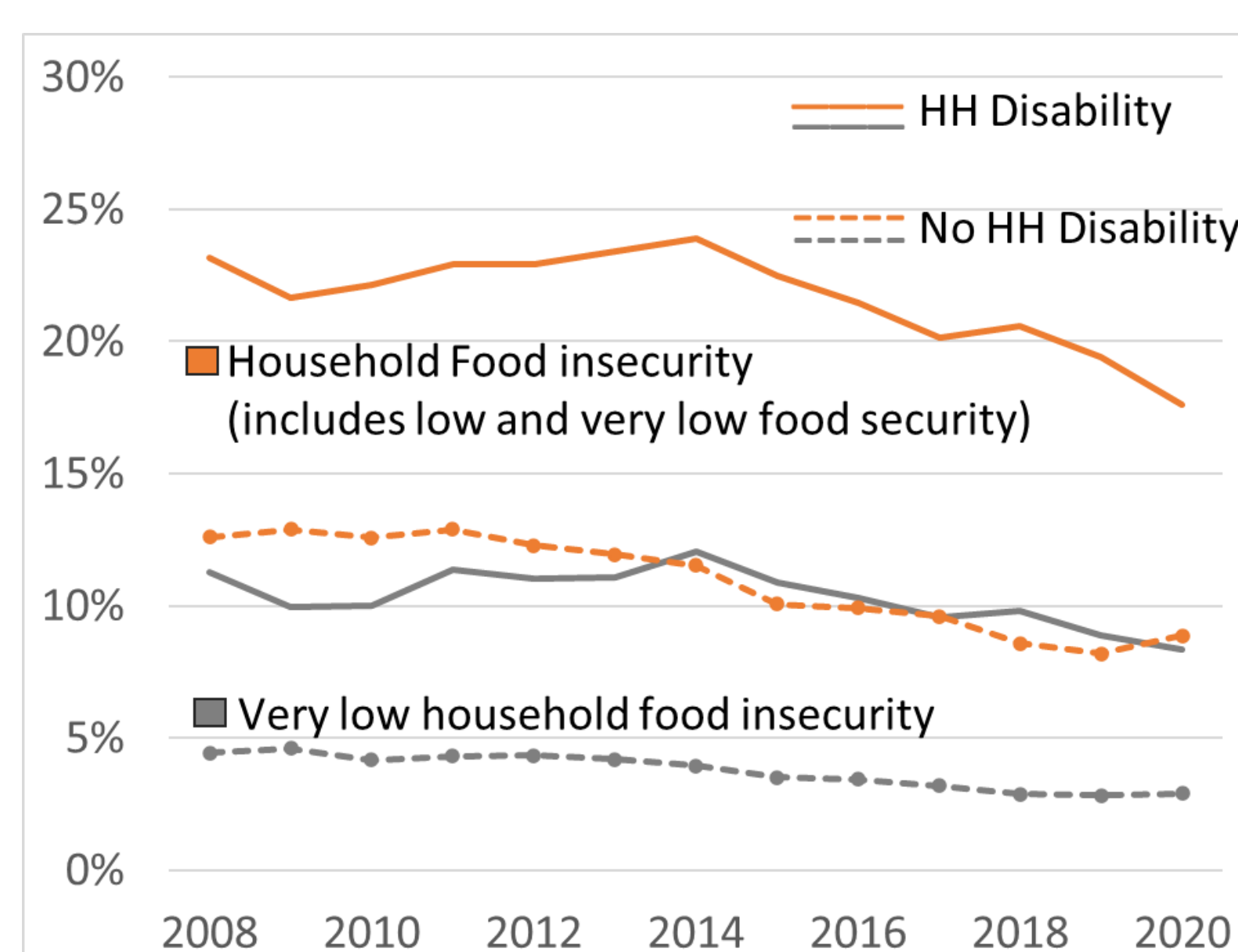


## Why Food Insecurity?



*“Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”*

-U.S. Dept of Agriculture

Source: Current Population Survey, 2008-2020

Disability is a leading indicator of food insecurity, both at the household-level (shown above) and at the individual level.

## Surveys Examined

CPS	NHIS	NHANES	AHS
Current Population Survey - Food Security Supplement	National Health Interview Survey	National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey	American Housing Survey
100,124 individuals 41,186 households	97,169 individuals 40,220 households	9629 individuals n/a	n/a 30,296 households
Labor force participation; earnings; occupation & industry; work experience; job tenure; reason for and length of unemployment	Health status & outcomes; influences on health; health behaviors and risk factors; access to health care, insurance; health conditions	Medical, dental, and physiological measurements; lab tests; dietary intake; health status	Housing costs, quality, and characteristics; Neighborhood; Tenure of residence (and reason for moves); transportation; household composition

## Notes

- When examining food insecurity, the reference period is important (12-month rates are higher than 30-day rates).
- Food insecurity is a household measure, so when individual food insecurity is observed, it should be interpreted as “individuals in food insecure households.”
- Disability measurement varies across studies. This may also affect our estimates
- Other surveys capture food insecurity but did not meet our inclusion criteria
  - Panel Survey of Income Dynamics
  - Survey of Program Dynamics
  - Survey of Income and Program Participation
  - Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey
  - National Survey of Children’s Health

## Research Goals & Methods

**Goals:** Being food insecure due to economic disadvantage may be exacerbated by the interaction of individual level characteristics associated with specific functional limitations.

We estimate food insecurity prevalence for households and individuals with disability in five federal surveys, considering how they may differ.

Each survey includes unique covariates that could be examined to better understand the relationship between disability and food insecurity in future research.

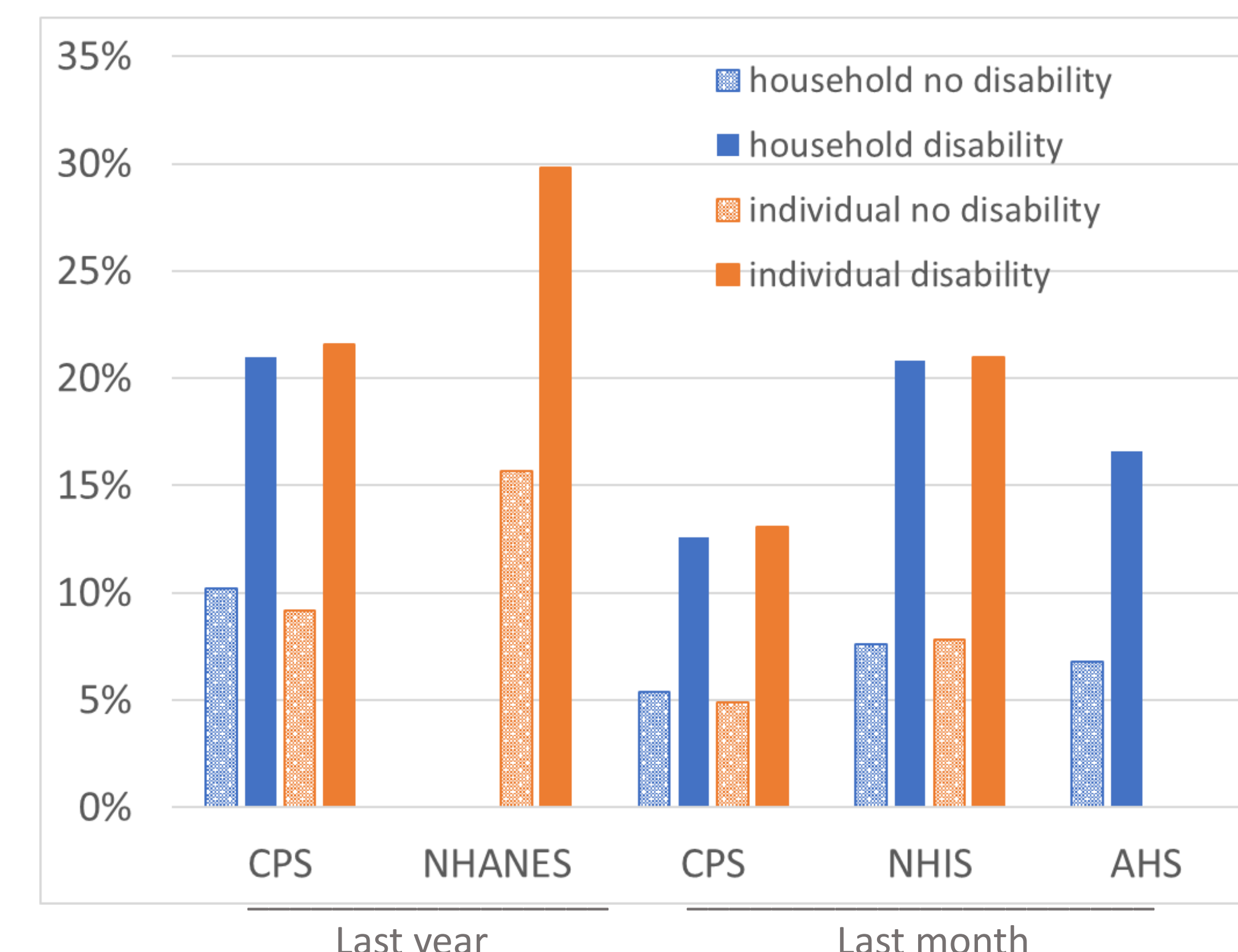
**Methods:** We identified five surveys with food insecurity measures observed in 2015-16 which also capture disability. We estimated food insecurity prevalence and modeled odds of being food insecure for the adult population with disabilities controlling for socio-demographic characteristics.

## Food Insecurity Prevalence by Survey

Across surveys, food insecurity rates show similar patterns by level of measurement and disability category. Rates do differ depending on the survey:

- NHANES had higher annual food insecurity overall (for both disability and non disability populations).
- NHIS had higher monthly food insecurity for the disability population.

Controlling for other related demographics may help.



## Conclusions

- Food insecurity is an economic and health concern for the disability population. Future analyses could pull additional measures to provide a more complete understanding of why disability results in a decreased likelihood of achieving food security, how food insecurity affects outcomes for adults with disabilities and their families, and possible program impacts on food security for those affected by disabilities.
- Future considerations:
  - When available, rely on annual food insecurity estimates.
  - Consider how survey context may prime/dissuade respondents to report food insecurity (e.g., survey topic, food security items placement)

## Measuring Food Insecurity

Adult food insecurity is assessed in response to 10 questions asked of those whose household incomes are below 185% of the poverty line. A household is classified as food insecure if 3 or more of the questions are flagged as food insecure. Example questions include:

- “We were worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.” (Households were recorded as food insecure if they reported “often” or “sometimes.”)
- “In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in the household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (note that some surveys ask for the last 12 months, and some ask about the last 30 days.)

## Are Food Insecurity Estimates Similar with Demographic Controls?

**Adjusted odds ratios for adult disability status in predicting adult food insecurity, by data source, food insecurity reference period, and unit of analysis**

Data Source	Individuals living in a food insecure household		Households that are food insecure	
	Last year	Last month	Last year	Last month
CPS	2.37 (.09)***	2.51 (.12)***	2.26 (.07)***	2.30 (.09)***
NHIS	-	2.63 (.11)***	-	2.91 (.10)***
NHANES	2.25 (.20)***	-	-	-
AHS	-	-	-	2.92 (.20)***

After controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, note that the impact of adult disability is similar even given differences in measurement.

**Disability is associated with a 225% to 292% increased odds of living in a food insecure household across the surveys.**

This confirms that the relationship between disability and food insecurity is large and is observed in each source.

## Further Reading

Henly, M., Brucker, D.L., & Coleman-Jensen, A. (2022). Food insecurity among those with disability: Cross-survey comparison of estimates and implications for future research. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, 1-21. doi: 10.1002/aapp.13336



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