

# DHERN May 2025 Newsletter

## DHERN Announcements

- Join us for our June DHERN meeting, “At the Margins of Care: Uncovering Health Inequities Faced by Refugees with Disabilities Living in the U.S.,” featuring Mustafa Rfat, PhD! Dr. Rfat is a Ph.D. candidate in Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis and a McDonnell Scholar. His research focuses on the intersection of forced displacement, disability, and structural inequities. CART and ASL interpretation will be available. [Register now](#) to attend on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2-3pm ET.
- At the conclusion of the June 24<sup>th</sup> DHERN meeting, there will be a mentoring session from 3:00-3:30 PM ET for graduate students and postdocs working in disability health equity. Mustafa Rfat, Bonnie Swenor, and Scott Landes will be in attendance to talk with students and postdocs about their work as disabled scholars in the disability health equity space. This post-meeting session is open to all graduate students and postdocs.
- The Institute for Health and Disability Policy Studies at the University of Kansas is recruiting adults in the U.S. with physical, mental, emotional, or other health conditions to take the [2025 National Survey on Health and Disability](#). The goal of this survey is to better understand how access to health care services and types of insurance coverage affect the daily life, health, and community participation of people with disabilities. Responses will help shape future policies and resources. This survey is available in English, Spanish, and ASL, —online, by phone, or via Zoom. For questions, contact [healthsurvey@ku.edu](mailto:healthsurvey@ku.edu).
- Share your recent publications, upcoming events, job opportunities with the DHERN community! To contribute to the next newsletter, please send details to us at [dhern@jh.edu](mailto:dhern@jh.edu) by the 28th.

## STUDY RECRUITMENT

- We are seeking volunteers for a research study to improve the experience and accessibility of making healthcare appointments online. Individuals with one or more disabilities or chronic illness and are 18+ years old may be eligible. If you are interested, complete our [short screening survey](#). For questions, contact [tbernst4@jh.edu](mailto:tbernst4@jh.edu). The Principal Investigators for this project are Dr. Theodore J. Iwashyna and Dr. Bonnielin Swenor. The Johns Hopkins Medicine Institutional Review Board has approved of this project under IRB#00463432.

- The Yale Disability Research Lab is recruiting participants for the next phase of the [Yale Intersectional Stigma Study](#). This study aims to better understand how racism, ableism, and daily challenges impact the health and well-being of Black/African American people with disabilities. Individuals who are 18 years or older, live in the United States, and identify as being part of both the Black/African American and disability communities may be eligible. For more information, contact [yaledisabilityresearch@gmail.com](mailto:yaledisabilityresearch@gmail.com).

### **Disability Data Equity Research Working Group Featured Article**

- Hall, J.P., Goddard, K.S., Ipsen, C., Myers, A., & Kurth, N.K. (2024). [Counting Everyone: Evidence for Inclusive Measures of Disability in Federal Surveys](#), Health Affairs Scholar, 2(9).

This article examines the limitations of the current ACS-6 disability questions used in federal surveys and explores alternative approaches for identifying people with disabilities. Using data from the 2023/2024 National Survey on Health and Disability, researchers found that adding a single broad question about health conditions identified 11.2% more disabled adults and better captured those with psychiatric disabilities. The findings support the need for more inclusive and accurate disability measures to inform programs and policies.

### **DHERN Member Submissions**

- Rfat, M., Cureton, A., Mirza, M., Trani, J.F. (2025). [The Devastating Effect of Abrupt US Refugee Policy Shifts](#). The Lancet, 405(10486), 1225.

This article focuses on the devastating consequences of recent U.S. refugee policy shifts. In January 2025, the U.S. suspended its Refugee Admissions Program, undermining international commitments and placing thousands—particularly individuals with disabilities, women, and unaccompanied children—at risk of deportation, harm, and worsening health outcomes. These findings highlight the urgent need for stable, inclusive refugee policies that address the needs of at-risk populations.

- In an [interview with Our Heart Speaks](#), Dr. Mustafa Rfat shares his personal journey as a refugee living with a disability. He reflects on experiences of forced displacement, disability, and post-traumatic growth—offering powerful insight into both the challenges and possibilities within the broader human experience.

- Engelman, A., & Izquierdo, A. (2025). [Accessible Services for Deaf Immigrants and Refugees in the United States: Exploring the capacity of deaf-serving organizations.](#) Journal of Migration and Health, 11, 100326

This article explores how deaf-led and deaf-focused organizations support deaf immigrants and refugees in the U.S., filling critical service gaps left by mainstream resettlement agencies. It highlights the importance of culturally and linguistically accessible services and the power of leadership by those with lived experience in shaping responsive, rights-based care.

- Engelman, A., Ismail, S., Fenlon, J., Noschese, E., & Farovitch, L. (2025). [Water and food insecurity & quality of life for deaf Nigerians: A community-based cross-sectional study.](#) Water Security, 11, 100188

A community-based study on how water and food insecurity impact deaf Nigerians' well-being. The research highlights systemic barriers to health and the need for inclusive development policies.

- Engelman, A., Booze, J., Izquierdo, A. (2024). [Global Deaf and Disability-Led Partnerships for Accessible Emergency Response and Humanitarian Action.](#) Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 51(1)

This article highlights global efforts led by deaf and disabled communities to improve accessibility in emergency and humanitarian response. It underscores the power of community-driven, cross-border collaboration.

From,

The DHERN Team

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