Iowa Aging and Disability Resource Connections

Pre-ADRC Consumers' Needs Assessment:

Summary of 2005 Iowa State Fair Consumer Surveys

Conducted by:

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Background

The goal of the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) is to provide older Iowans and persons with disabilities the right information and resources to support and streamline their access to long-term living supports. To support the development of the ADRC, three surveys about perceptions of aging and disability resources were given to attendees at the 2005 Iowa State Fair. In cooperation with the ADRC implementation team, the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs and Iowa State University's Research Institute for Studies in Education staff developed and administrated three survey instruments to assess how participants access and use information on aging and disability. This summary provides information from three surveys. It is important to note that the surveys were distributed randomly to a convenience sample at the State Fair. The purpose of this summary report is to provide baseline information related to development of the ADRC and its future evaluation.

Methods

A survey item pool was developed regarding Iowans' needs regarding access and use of information about the ADRC. The items were divided into three different survey instruments. The surveys were designed so that individuals could complete them in a short amount of time. Rather than ask people to take several minutes to complete a lengthy survey, we divided the questions into three separate shorter surveys. All three surveys included common demographic questions probing for age, disability status, purposes for seeking information, and size of community. The surveys focused on: (1) preferences for current and future information sources (A), (2) usability of computers and the Internet (B), and (3) awareness of four ADRC pilot sites—Iowa COMPASS, the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), the Iowa Family Caregiver Program (IFCP), and Iowa 211 (C). Demographic variables from the three surveys were merged into a single file to facilitate the reporting of results.

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Results

Demographic Characteristics and Needs in Aging and Disability Resources

A total of 95 surveys were collected from attendees of the 2005 Iowa State Fair, of which 34 respondents returned survey A, 31 returned survey B, and 30 returned survey C. Table 1 provides demographic characteristics for the survey respondents. A majority (77%) of respondents were aged 50 and over; 50 (53%) were aged 60 and over, 23 (24%) were aged 50 through 59, 10 (10.5%) were aged 40 through 49, 7 (7.4%) were aged 20-39, and 5 (5.3%) were aged under 20. Half of the respondents lived in locations with populations of 10,000 and over, whereas the rest lived in small towns or rural areas.

Table 1. Age and Location of Respondents to State Fair Surveys

Characteristics	N	%
Age		
Under 20	5	5.3
20-39	7	7.4
40-49	10	10.5
50-59	23	24.2
60 and over	50	52.6
Total	95	100
Location		
Rural	23	24.5
Town, less than 2,500	13	13.8
Town, 2,500-10,000	13	13.8
City, 10,000-50,000	14	14.9
City, more than 50,000	31	33.0
Total	94	100

The information in Table 2 suggests that many Iowans either have a disability or are caregivers. One out of three respondents reported having a disability of their own or caring for a person with a disability. This large percentage of respondents having a disability may be due to a large share of older Iowans in the sample or the recruiting method of the surveys (convenience sampling) or to the fact that the surveys were distributed from the State Fair booth of the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs, which serves as a natural point of contact for older Iowans. A majority of the respondents (70%) expressed a need for aging and disability resources. Thirty-one respondents were interested in aging and disability resources for themselves; of them, 8 (26%) were

interested in aging and disability resources for both themselves and other family members. A larger number of respondents (*n* = 35), expressed the need for resources only as caregivers. The most common needs for aging and disability resources among caregivers were for their parents (*n* = 25) and relatives (*n* = 18), followed by friend (*n* = 3) and client (*n* = 1). No respondents sought the resources for a child; this lack of responses for childcare needs may be due to sampling bias inherent in the nature of the convenience sample from the State Fair site, the fact that the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs provided the physical point of contact for prospective respondents.

Age differences were found among the individuals in need of aging and disability resources. The younger group (under 39) sought the resources as a caregiver, whereas the older group (40 and over) needed the resources for themselves and also as a caregiver. Some caregivers (*n* = 9) needed the aging and disability resources for two or three family member(s) or friend(s).

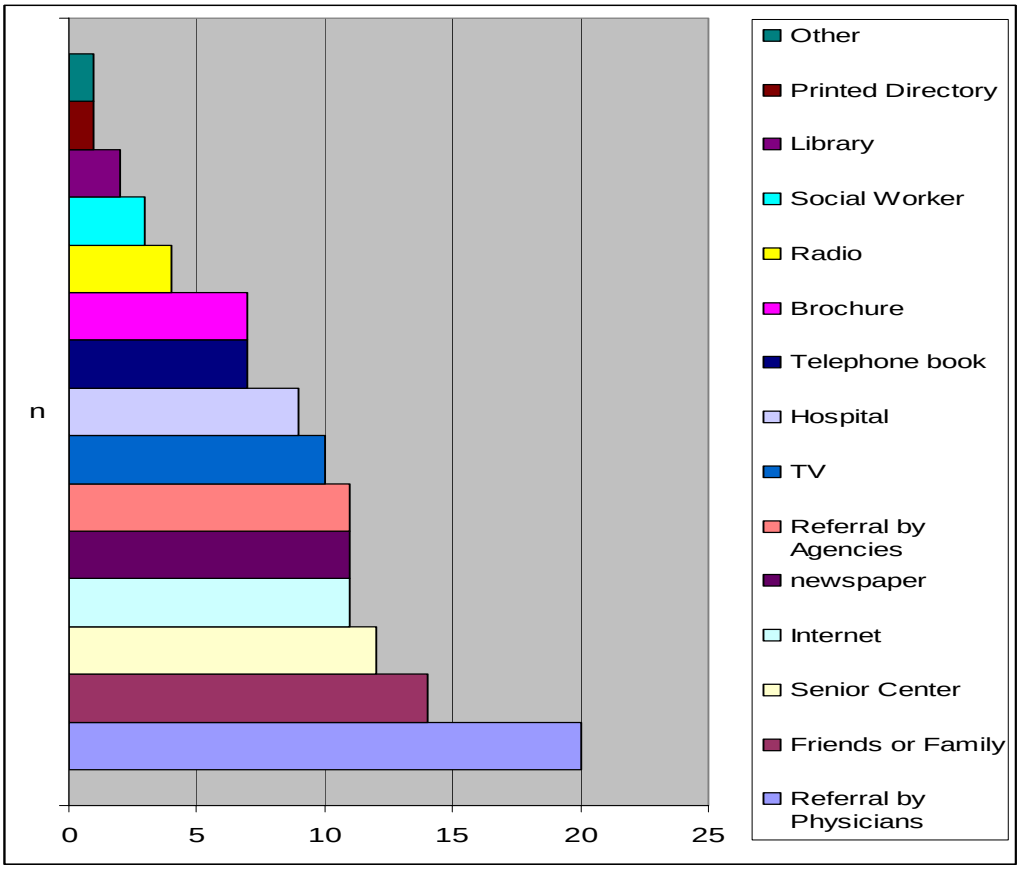
Table 2. Respondents' Disability Status and Needs for Aging and Disability Resources

Characteristics	**N**	**%**
Having a disability		
Yes	27	29.3
No	65	70.7
Total	92	100
Interested in aging and disability resources		
No need	29	30.5
For yourself only	23	24.2
For yourself and other(s)	8	8.4
For other(s) only	35	36.8
Total	95	100
Interested in aging and disability resources		
For yourself	31	40
For parent	25	32
For child	0	0
For other relatives	18	23
For friend	3	4
For client	1	1
Total	78	100

Survey A: Current/future Information Source for Aging and Disability Resource & Comfortableness in Using Internet

A total of 34 respondents returned survey A, which was focused on current and future information sources for aging and disability resources. Figure 1 provides information regarding the sources respondents used or would use to find out about services. As seen in the graph, respondents used a variety of resources to gather information about services. The most commonly used information source was referral by physician (*n* = 20), followed by friends or family (*n* = 14), senior center (*n* = 12), Internet (*n* = 11), newspapers (*n* = 11), and referral by agencies (*n* = 11). The least preferred sources were printed directory (*n* = 1), library (*n* = 2), social worker (*n* = 3), and radio (*n* = 4).

Figure 1. Information Sources for Aging and Disability Resources



No difference was found in the sources respondents used or would use by age bracket, except for information coming from friends or family and from the Internet.

Younger respondents were more likely than older ones to turn to their friends or family to seek information about aging and disability services in Iowa (χ^2 = 14.080 *df* = 4, *p* = .007: gamma = -.641, *p* = .004). In contrast, older respondents (age 60 and over) were less likely than younger respondents (age 59 and below) to seek their information from Internet sources (gamma = -.607 *p* = .016).

Table 3. How comfortable would you feel using electronic resources, such as Internet Websites, to get information about aging and disability services?

Age	Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Somewhat uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable	Total N (%)
Under 20	0	1	0	0	1
	(.0)	(100.0)	(.0)	(.0)	(100.0)
20-39	0	1	0	0	1
	(.0)	(100.0)	(.0)	(.0)	(100.0)
40-49	3	1	0	0	4
	(75.0)	(25.0)	(.0)	(.0)	(100.0)
50-59	5	2	1	0	8
	(62.5)	(25.0)	(12.5)	(.0)	(100.0)
60 or over	4	2	7	5	18
	(22.2)	(11.1)	(38.9)	(27.8)	(100.0)
Total	12	7	8	5	32
	(37.5)	(21.9)	(25.0)	(15.6)	(100.0)

One notable finding is the high proportion of respondents who indicate they would feel comfortable using the Internet (Table 3). All respondents aged 49 and below would feel comfortable using the Internet and four out of five respondents in the 50-59 age bracket also felt comfortable using the Internet. Six respondents (33%) aged 60 and over said they would be very or somewhat comfortable using the Internet, whereas 5 respondents (28%) said they would be very uncomfortable.

The results from survey A highlight the usability (or possibilities) of the Internet as an information source for aging and disability resources among Iowans. Also, a majority of Iowans, including senior citizens, feel comfortable using the Internet to seek information about aging and disability. A relatively small proportion of senior Iowans expressed negative connotations about using the Internet. The results support the urgent needs for ADRC among Iowans.

Survey B: Usability of Computer among Iowans

A total of 31 respondents returned survey B, which focused on the usability of computers. Table 4 provides information regarding the availability, usability, and trust in the confidentiality of Internet services. About two out of every three respondents (65.4%) expressed trust by their willingness to share personal information to save time and improve services through Web-based services. Nine out of every ten (n = 28) respondents responded that they have access to a computer, and three out of every four (n = 22) knew how to use the Internet. Over half of the total respondents (63%) used a computer on a daily basis, and 13% used a computer 6 to 15 times a month.

Table 4. Availability, Usability, and Trust in Confidentiality of Internet Services

Item	N	%
Access to a computer		
Yes	28	90
No	3	10
Total	31	100
How frequently do you use a computer?		
Never	2	6.7
Less than 5 times a month	5	16.7
6 to 15 times a month	4	13.3
Daily	19	63.3
Total	30	100
How to use the Internet		
Know	22	71
Don't know	9	29
Total	31	100
Trust in confidentiality:		
Very comfortable	7	26.9
Somewhat comfortable	10	38.5
Somewhat uncomfortable	6	23.1
Very uncomfortable	3	11.5
Total	26	100

Access to a computer and knowing how to use the internet did not differ by location. However, use of a computer differed significantly by respondents' location.[χ^2 = 23.329 df =12, p = .025] As seen in Table 5, State Fair attendees from rural areas or small cities were more likely to use their computer daily, compared to attendees from metro areas. This result implies that the Internet may be an important communication and

information source among Iowans living in geographically isolated rural areas or small cities.

Table 5. Computer Usage by Location (How frequently do you use a computer?)

Frequency	Rural	Town, less than 2,500	Town, 2,500~ 10,000	City, 10,000~ 50,000	City, more than 50,000	Total N (%)
Never	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (100.0)	2 (100.0)
Less than 5 times a month	0 (.0)	1 (20.0)	3 (60.0)	1 (20.0)	0 (.0)	5 (100.0)
6 to 15 times a month	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)	4 (100.0)
Daily	5 (26.3)	4 (21.1)	2 (10.5)	2 (10.5)	6 (31.6)	19 (100.0)
Total	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	6 (20.0)	9 (30.0)	30 (100.0)

Also, the age bracket of 60 and over showed mixed responses in Internet usability. Whereas all respondents aged 59 and below knew how to use the Internet (by visiting a Website), half of elderly respondents (n = 9) replied they were not knowledgeable. This result indicates the need for adult education about Internet knowledge, suggests that a nuanced approach to targeting senior citizens electronically would be desirable, and demonstrates the utility of providing assistance to older Iowans regarding how to access and use the ADRC Website.

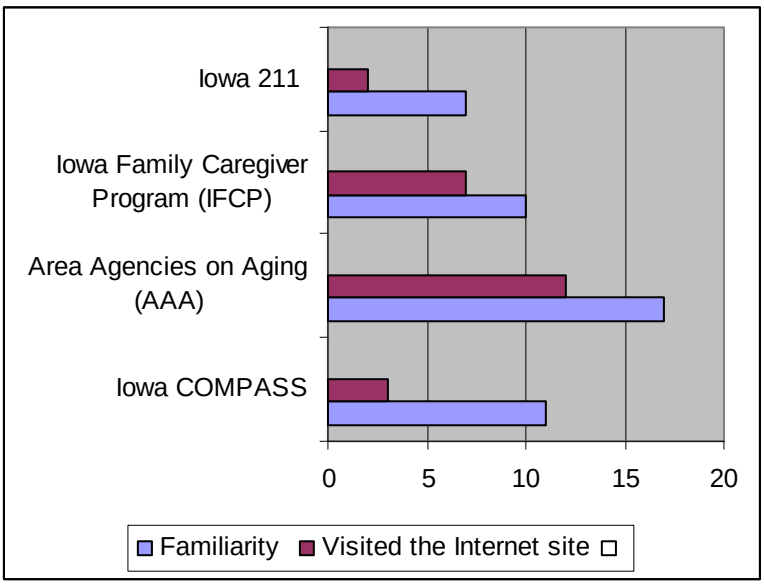
Table 6. Internet Knowledge by Age (Do you know how to use the Internet?)

N (%)	Under 20	20~39	40~49	50~59	60 or over	Total
No	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (53)	9 (29)
Yes	2 (100)	2 (100)	4 (100)	6 (100)	8 (47)	22 (71)
Total	2 (100)	2 (100)	4 (100)	6 (100)	17 (100)	31 (100.0)

Survey C: Awareness of Four ADRC Pilot Sites

A total of 30 respondents returned survey C, which was focused on familiarity with information and referral/assistance services from Iowa COMPASS, the AAAs, the IFCP, and Iowa 211. As seen in Figure 2, the State Fair attendees were most familiar with the AAAs and least familiar with Iowa 211.

Figure 2. Familiarity and Internet Site Experiences with Four ADRC Pilot Sites



Respondents were most likely to visit the AAA Internet sites, followed by the IFCP, whereas fewer visited the Internet sites for Iowa COMPASS and Iowa 211. A majority of respondents (n = 21) indicated that they would consider visiting these Internet sites in the future to get information on services.

This report created subgroups based on respondents' motivation for seeking aging and disability resources, such as groups interested in resources for self, resources for self and other(s), resources for other(s), and not interested in resources (Table 2). Regarding the less familiar pilot sites—Iowa COMPASS and Iowa 211—respondents who were interested in aging and disability resources for both self and other(s) were more likely to be familiar with those agencies, whereas respondents not interested in the resources were least familiar with those agencies. Respondents interested in resources for self, self and other(s), and other(s) only were more likely to be familiar with the AAAs and the IFCP, and would be more likely to visit the AAA and IFCP Websites.