

7. General Disability Allowance

A. Pensions in the General Disability Branch

In the General Disability Branch, the following benefits are paid by law:

- **Disability Pension** – assures a minimum subsistence income for people whose ability to earn a living or practice their trade is damaged. Paid since 1974.
- **Special Services Benefit** – for disabled individuals who are dependent on others to perform daily tasks or require constant supervision, by funding the help they need. Paid since 1979.
- **Disabled Child Benefit** – paid (since 1981) to families caring for their disabled child at home.

This branch also handles benefits that are paid not by through the National Insurance Act:

- **Mobility Allowance** – paid (since 1975) to individuals with restricted mobility¹, to help with their mobility costs outside the home.
- **Compensation for sufferers of scalp ringworm (*tinea capitis*)** – paid (since 1995) to individuals who were treated for this condition with radiation in the period 1946-1960 and consequently became ill.
- **Compensation for polio victims** – paid (since 2007) to anyone who contracted polio in Israel or was treated here and as a result suffered medical disability.

Table 1
**Recipients of General Disability pension, Special Services,
 Disabled Child and Mobility (average per month), 2010-2014**

Year	Disability		Special services		Disabled child		Mobility	
	No. of recipients	% change	No. of recipients	% change	No. of recipients	% change	No. of recipients	% change
2010	207,174	3.5%	33,134	6.2%	27,870	5.1%	31,616	4.1%
2011	212,951	2.8%	35,219	6.3%	29,483	5.8%	32,964	4.3%
2012	217,589	2.2%	37,825	7.4%	32,103	8.9%	34,087	3.4%
2013	222,641	2.3%	40,860	8.0%	36,006	12.2%	35,311	3.6%
2014	226,552	1.8%	46,214	13.1%	40,473	12.4%	36,601	3.7%

A study published in 2012 by the NII together with the Joint – Brookdale Institute found that in Israel there are one million people of working age who define themselves (subjective definition) as limited in some way that affects their ability to function². About a quarter of them, 258,000, received one or more benefits from the NII General

1 People with leg problems, as specified in the Act.

2 Naon et al (2012): Working Age Disabled in Israel – Incidence in the population, characteristics, and employment status. National Insurance Institution.

Disability Branch in 2014 – an annual growth of 2.3% in numbers. About 100,000 received a pension from the Ministry of Defense or a Work Accident Victim's pension from the NII. As for the remainder, either their level of disability does not qualify them for a pension, or they have not lost their ability to earn a living, or they are not claiming their full rights.

Recipients of the general disability pension constitute some 90% of all eligible persons in the Branch. In 2013, the monthly average was 226,552, about 4.7% of the eligible age group (from 18 to retirement age). After a decade during which the retirement age has

Table 2
Adult Recipients of Disability pensions
by Type of Benefit, December 2014

No. of benefits	Type of benefit	No. of recipients	Rate of change
Total	Disabled Adults	258,588	2.27%
	General Disability	228,506	1.7%
	Special Services	48,846	16.2%
	Mobility	32,801	3.8%
	Scalp Ringworm	4,394	2.6%
	Polio	4,251	0.7%
One benefit	General Disability only	183,981	-0.9%
	Special Services only	9,325	11.0%
	Mobility only	11,314	4.4%
	Scalp Ringworm only	3,724	5.1%
	Polio only	1,114	4.6%
Two benefits	General Disability + SSA	26,768	23.9%
	General Disability + Mobility	7,010	0.6%
	General Disability + Scalp Ringworm	299	-23.9%
	General Disability + Polio	268	-6.6%
	SSA + Mobility	2,552	13.5%
	SSA + Scalp Ringworm	136	10.6%
	SSA + Polio	45	45.2%
	Mobility + Scalp Ringworm	65	20.4%
	Mobility + Polio	1,368	0.1%
	Scalp Ringworm + Polio	4	0.0%
Three benefits	General Disability, SSA + Mobility	9,001	4.1%
	General Disability, SSA + Ringworm	64	-3.0%
	General Disability, SSA + Polio	58	-24.7%
	Gen. Dis., Mobility + Ringworm	19	-5.0%
	General Disability, Mobility + Polio	573	-5.0%
	SSA, Mobility + Scalp Ringworm	52	6.1%
	SSA, Mobility + Polio	379	15.9%
	SSA, Scalp Ringworm + Polio	1	0.0%
	Mobility, Scalp Ringworm + Polio	3	0.0%
Four benefits	Gen Dis., SSA, Mobility + Ringworm	27	-3.6%
	Gen Dis., SSA, Mobility + Polio	438	-4.6%

changed and Amendment 109 to the law was introduced (Laron Act), the annual rate of growth in number of recipients stabilized at about 2% annually – equal to the natural growth rate in the population.

In 2014 there was a sharp rise in the number of recipients of the Special Services Allowance, due to the change in eligibility tests (the IADL test was added) and the slight effect of reducing the waiting days for eligibility to start. Numbers of recipients of the child disability pension continued to rise following the extension of the eligibility grounds (**Amendment Or-Noi 2**). This trend will probably continue, although not necessarily at the same pace. Meanwhile, growth rate in the number of Mobility Allowance recipients remained unchanged from previous years (about 3.5%).

Since 1999, a disabled person who meets all the conditions defined in the laws and regulations, may receive more than one benefit for the same period from the General Disability Branch. In December 2014, 49,130 disabled adults and 4,282 disabled minors (about 21% of benefit recipients in this Branch) received two or more benefits simultaneously (Tables 2 and 3). Particularly striking is the attendance allowance (SSA), where 81% of recipients are entitled to additional benefits (usually a disability pension), and the compensation for polio victims, of whom 74% of eligible recipients also receive an additional benefit (usually mobility allowance).

Table 3
Minor Recipients of Benefits by Type of Benefit, December 2014

No. of benefits	Type of benefit	No. of recipients	Rate of change
Total	Minor disabled	42,481	11.16%
One benefit	Disabled child	37,947	12.4%
	Mobility	252	0%
Two benefits	Dis. Child + mobility	4,282	1.7%

B. Disability pension

1. Main Points of the Law

In the framework of general disability insurance, a monthly allowance is paid to residents of Israel aged 18 to retirement age whose ability to earn a living from work³ is affected by disability. This benefit assures them a minimum income to survive⁴. The law defines two types of eligible persons:

- **Disabled earners:** men or women who, due to a physical, mental or emotional handicap, from illness, accident or congenital, have either lost 50% or more of their earning ability, or whose monthly income from work does not exceed the threshold

3 When determining eligibility for a disability pension, any income not from work is not taken into account.

4 The Disability pension is paid from the 91st day after the disability occurs or appears, providing that the claim is filed within 15 months. For later claims, payment will start at a later date.

defined by law. The law distinguishes between two groups of eligible persons: (a) severely disabled⁵ or chronically disabled⁶, who are eligible for the benefit if their earnings from work do not exceed 60% of the average wage; (b) all the rest: anyone whose earnings from work do not exceed 45% of the average wage.

- **Housewives:** married women, who did not work outside the home for the periods defined by law before submitting the benefit claim, and who because of a physical, mental or emotional handicap, due to illness, accident or congenital, have lost at least 50% of their ability to function in the home.

2. The process of determining eligibility

There are a number of stages in this process:

- **Examining income from work at the time of joining:** the size of income from work that makes the individual eligible for benefit payment varies according to the medical condition and the group to which the insured belongs.
- **Determining medical disability:** a physician authorized by the NII who, referring to medical tests and documents, determines the percent of medical disability based on tests stipulated by law. The medical percentage expresses the severity of the medical condition. At this stage, the doctor and the claims clerk check if the threshold conditions for a disabled definition are met: (a) working disabled – at least 60% medical disability, or 40% if there is at least one disability at the rate of 25% or more; (b) a housewife with a medical disability of at least 50%.
- **Determining the level of inability to earn:** The NII claims clerk, after consulting with the NII doctor and rehabilitation clerk, decides to what degree the disabled person's ability to earn a living is damaged⁷ - according to ability to return to work (full or part time) or find other suitable work, subject to his/her training, physical fitness and medical condition. The determination of full or partial unfitness for work expresses the full or partial loss of the ability to earn a living, whether permanently or for a limited period.

3. Laron Act

In August 2009, Amendment 109 of the National Insurance Act (**the Laron Act**) came into force, designed to improve conditions for disability pension recipients who went out to work, with the intention of improving their quality of life, integrating them into society, and strengthening their image in the public's eyes. The main effect of the amendment was to permit greater income from work without denying eligibility for the

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5 Severely disabled: medically determined disability of at least 70%, or mental or emotional handicap of at least 40%.

6 Chronically disabled: eligibility of at least 60 months in the 7 years prior to 1.8.2009.

7 Less than 50% loss of earning capacity does not confer eligibility for the benefit.

benefit and the associated benefits, and to ensure that the total income from work and benefits would always be higher than the benefit alone⁸.

To separate people with high potential of finding work from those whose chances are poor, the disabled were divided into two groups (see the explanation above for the term “disabled earners”). The law also created various levels of income from work for determining benefit eligibility, with the aim of encouraging employment. The amendment also added a new incentive in the framework of the disabled benefit – the encouragement benefit, paid instead of the disability pension to anyone whose income from work exceeded the amount specified in the law, namely 45%-60% depending on group, and who had been eligible for the disability pension for at least 12 months.

4. Amount of allowance and supplements

- A disabled earner or housewife defined as completely unfit for work (75% at least) is eligible for a monthly allowance equal to 26.75% of the basic amount defined in law.
- A disabled person who is fully unfit for work and not in an institution, whose degree of medical disability is at least 50% (since March 2014, for medical disability under sections 33 or 91d – at least 40%) **an additional monthly allowance** of NIS 252-372 is paid (in 2014). About 68% of recipients were eligible for this supplement in 2014.
- For a spouse or partner (whether married or not) living in Israel, whose monthly income does not exceed 57% of the average wage, a supplement equal to 50% of the full single person’s benefit is paid. A disabled housewife is entitled to a supplement for the first two children only and not for her spouse.
- For a child resident in Israel (as defined by the NII), a supplement of 40% of the single person’s benefit is paid (for the first two children only).
- A disabled person who receives a supplement for dependents and who has income not from work, will have any income not from work deducted from the supplement for the dependents (only).
- Apart from benefits provided by the NII, recipients of the disability pension or encouragement allowance are also entitled to benefits from various public bodies subject to various conditions⁹.

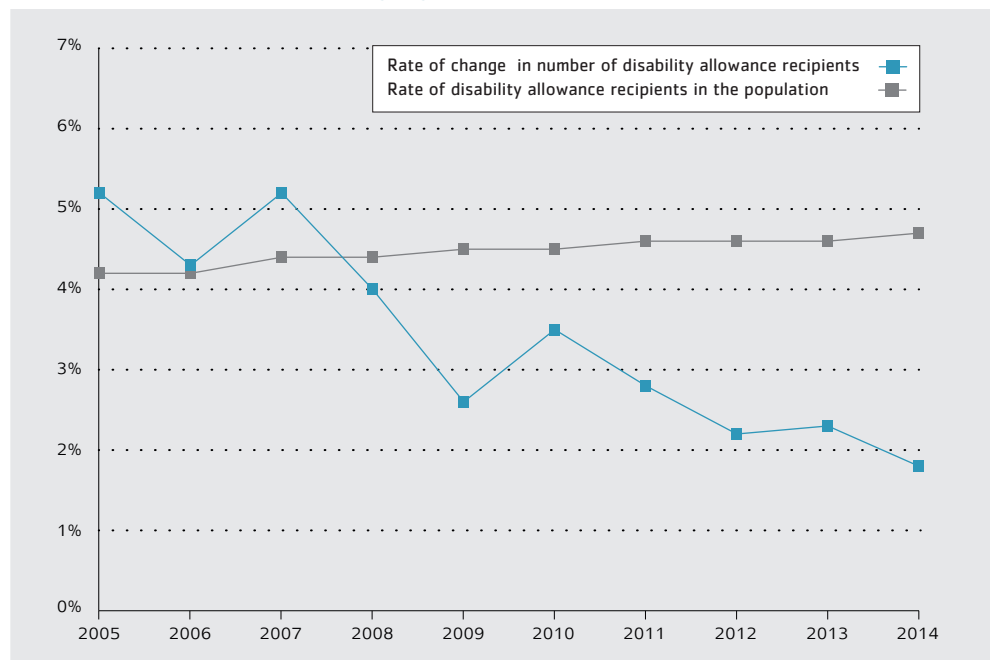
8 Until the Amendment was introduced, the disability pension stopped according to the disabled person’s education (when income from work was greater than 37.5/ 45/ 55% of the average wage), and presently it is offset according to Table H1 as defined by law: for income from work not exceeding 21% of the average wage, the monthly benefit does not change. For income of 21-25% of the average wage, the benefit is reduced by 10%; for income of 25-68% it is reduced by 30%; for income of 68-93%, by 40%, and for income higher than 93% - by 60%.

9 These benefits include: exemption from payment of NII contributions, exemption from income tax and purchase tax to the Ministry of Finance, discounts in local taxes and water rates, help with rent or apartment purchase from the Ministry of Housing, discount on taxes paid to the Israel Land Administration, discounts on public transport, and discounts from the Ministry of Welfare and payments to HMOs.

5. Recipients of Disability Allowance

From the early 2000s, growth in the number of people receiving disability pensions was more than twice the rate of natural increase in the population. There are a number of reasons for this: (a) the gradually rising retirement age for men and women; (b) increasing rates of sickness in the population, due to greater reporting of sicknesses and falling mortality rates among the sick; (c) change in the income threshold for eligibility and the gradual offset of the disability pension against income from work. Once this potential was fully utilized by new recipients who became eligible for these changes, the annual growth rate stabilized at 2% - very close to the natural increase in population (Diagram 1). However, the proportion of disability pension recipients in the working age population continues to rise (4.7% in 2014), for a number of reasons: increasing illness rates, fall in mortality rates, and decline in the growth rate of the working age population.

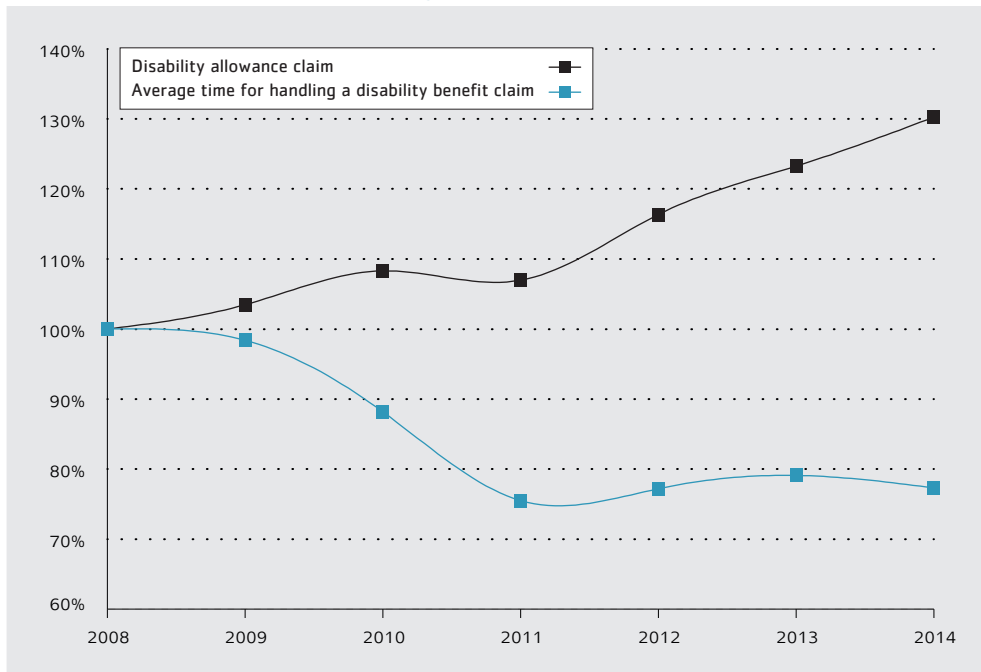
Diagram 1
Disability pension Recipients and Advancement
of Working Age Population, 2005-2014



As stated, notwithstanding the decline in the annual increase in the number of eligible persons, the number of claims for the general disability pension continues to rise (reaching 113,000 in 2014), with no real change in the rate of rejected claims. On the other hand, there was a rise in the number of people leaving the system, which affects the net increase in recipients.

In spite of the ongoing growth in the annual number of claims, as part of improvement in service to the insured, the NII has set itself the goal of reducing as far as possible the

Diagram 2
Change in Number of Claims for General Disability pension and Average Claim Handling Time, 2008-2014



time taken to handle claims from submission to decision. This goal has been achieved: compared to 2008, the average time for handling a disability pension claim has fallen by 20% and now stands at an average of 55 days (Diagram 2).

A look at the breakdown of benefit recipients in December 2014 by sex and degree of disability¹⁰ shows a significant gap between disabled earners and housewives (Table

Table 4
Recipients of Disability pension by Degree of Incapacity and Sex (absolute numbers and percentages), December 2014

Sex		Total		Degree of incapacity (percent)			
		Absolute numbers	Percent	60%	65%	74%	75% -100%
Total	Numbers	228,805		23,213	16,543	5,020	183,729
	Percentage		100	10.2	7.2	2.2	80.4
Men		132,577	100	8.8	5.5	1.6	84.1
Women	Total	95,929	100	12.0	9.6	3.0	75.3
	Earning	80,129	100	9.0	6.5	1.9	82.6
	Housewives	15,800	100	27.6	25.5	8.6	38.3

¹⁰ The breakdown of benefit recipients by their percentage of medical disability is given in Table F/1 in the Appendix.

4). About 84% of the earners (men and women) were defined as having a full loss of earning capacity and were therefore eligible for the full benefit, while only 38% of the housewives were defined as having full loss of capacity. These differences are due to different eligibility tests for these two groups.

The main handicap for about a third of disability pension recipients is mental illness¹¹ (Table 5). Characteristics of the main disability vary with age: among younger claimants, congenital problems are more prominent (such as learning difficulties, deafness, mental illness¹²), while among older claimants disabilities that develop with age are more prominent (e.g. internal, urogenital¹³). In 2014 the average age of recipients of the disability pension was 47.

Table 5
Recipients of Disability Allowance by Current Age, Average Age
and Main Disability (absolute numbers and percentages), December 2014

Main disability		Total		Age (percentage)					Average age
		Numbers	%	24-18	34-25	44-35	54-45	55- retirement	
Total	Numbers	228,506		16,840	33,812	42,237	54,884	80,733	47.0
	Percentage		100	100	100	100	100	100	
Mental	Psychotic	45,664	20.0	20.2	27.7	28.0	20.4	12.2	43.5
	Psychoneurotic	30,957	13.5	16.4	16.7	15.3	14.8	9.8	44.4
Learning disabilities		23,193	10.1	22.3	19.1	13.6	7.6	3.8	38.6
Internal		54,476	23.8	8.9	9.3	14.0	24.0	38.1	53.6
Urogenital		7,237	3.2	1.3	1.5	2.3	3.7	4.3	51.7
Neurological		29,148	12.8	16.0	13.0	12.4	11.6	12.9	46.5
Locomotor		19,196	8.4	5.0	5.2	7.3	9.6	10.3	50.0
Sensory	Vision	10,722	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.6	5.0	47.6
	Hearing	5,497	2.4	4.8	2.8	2.1	2.1	2.1	44.1
Other		2,416	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.5	1.5	1.4	52.3

About 47% of disability pension recipients are married¹⁴ and should apparently be eligible for a spousal supplement, but about 41% of them receive a single person's benefit due to the high income of the recipient (not from work) or of the spouse (whether or not from work) (Table 6). The proportion of married female disabled earners is low, because a married woman who did not work before submitting a claim for the period of time

11 The disability with the highest medical percentage among all disabilities. Percentage disabilities for national insurance are not determined by illnesses but by the function of various limbs and organs.

12 Learning difficulty: includes Down Syndrome; mental illness – includes autism.

13 Internal: includes blood, heart, liver and respiratory illnesses, diabetes, asthma and most cases of cancer. Urogenital: problems with kidneys, urinary tract, fertility and bladder problems (common among patients with prostate cancer).

14 Excluding unmarried partners.

Table 6
Recipients of Disability pension by Composition of Dependents
and Family Status (numbers and percentages), December 2014

Family status		Total		Dependents					
		Number	%	None	One child	Two children	Spouse	Spouse + child	Spouse + 2 children
Total	Number	228,506		151,044	17,634	21,485	15,578	6,944	15,821
	Percent		100%	66%	8%	9%	7%	3%	7%
Married	Total	107,542	47%	43,681	10,288	15,890	15,390	6,790	15,503
	Men	65,040	28%	22,363	3,870	5,572	13,555	5,855	13,825
	Earning women	26,702	12%	12,575	3,928	5,751	1,835	935	1,678
	Housewives	15,800	7%	8,743	2,490	4,567	.	.	.
Not married	Total	120,964	53%	107,363	7,346	5,595	188	154	318
	Men	67,537	30%	61,837	2,833	2,283	156	136	292
	Earning women	53,427	23%	45,526	4,513	3,312	32	18	26

defined by the law is considered a housewife. However, the proportion of women defined as housewives is decreasing, and the proportion defined as earners is growing, mainly because of the increased rate of employment among women.

C. Special Services Allowance

1. Main points of the Law

The Attendance allowance (SSA) is paid to people who need help with daily tasks according to the ADL test (dressing, eating, washing, using the toilet and mobility in the home) and with running the home according to the IADL¹⁵ test (preparing food, maintaining the home, taking medication, dealing with official and financial affairs, shopping outside the house, using appliances), or who need constant supervision to prevent danger to themselves and to others¹⁶.

Eligibility applies to residents of Israel who have not reached retirement age before submitting the claim, providing they meet the following conditions:

- Receiving disability pension: if their degree of medical disability is 60% or over (for recognized types of disability), and on condition they are not receiving a special benefit for victims of work accidents or payments for personal care or help in the house according to another law.
- People undergoing treatment for oncological diseases and dependent on others, patients undergoing dialysis (at least twice a week), the recipient of an organ transplant

15 Introduced in 2014.

16 Similar to the terms of eligibility under the Nursing Insurance Act, section 223 of the National Insurance Act (Combined version), 5755-1995.

(kidney, heart, spleen, lung, liver) or one who has received a bone marrow transplant, whether an autograft or allograft.

- Individuals who do not receive the general disability pension but meet one of the following conditions: (a) they have been defined as having at least 75% medical disability and their monthly income from work is no higher than 5 times the average wage (NIS 45,554 in 2014), and they do not receive a special benefit for victims of work accidents or payments for personal care or help in the house according to another law; (b) new immigrants (with an immigrant ID) who have been in the country for less than a year.

Anyone receiving benefits under a mobility agreement will be eligible for the SSA only if a medical committee decides that they are 100% restricted in mobility or are confined to a wheelchair or need and use a wheelchair.

Anyone who was eligible for the SSA before reaching retirement age, on reaching that age can choose between the SSA and the nursing benefit. Anyone hospitalized in an institution that provides medical, nursing or rehabilitation services is not eligible for the SSA.

2. Size of the Allowance

The size of the SSA is determined relative to a full single person's disability pension (25% of the basic amount), and a supplement is also paid (the additional monthly allowance – AMA). There are three levels, determined by degree of dependence (all amounts are correct to 2014¹⁷):

- Anyone who needs considerable help with most daily activities most of the day is eligible for the basic allowance – 50% of a full single person's disability pension, and AMA at 14% – a total of NIS 1,401 per month.
- Anyone who needs considerable help with all daily activities most of the day is eligible for an allowance of 105% and AMA at 28.5% – a total of NIS 2,922 per month.
- Anyone who is entirely dependent on another person for all daily activities throughout the day is eligible for an allowance of 175% and AMA at 42.5% – a total of NIS 4,761 per month.

3. Recipients of the Special Services Allowance

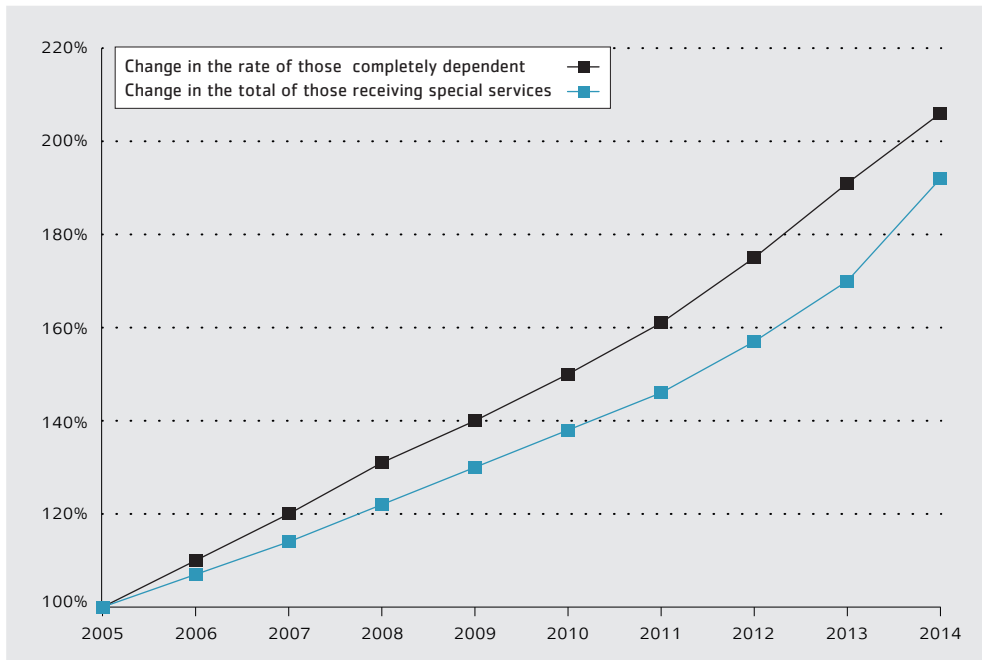
In December 2014, 48,846 people received the Attendance allowance (SSA) – about 16% more than in December 2013; for 9,493 of them this was the first year. There are several reasons for the rise in the number of recipients: (a) improvements in medical treatment for the seriously ill which extends life span, as shown by the continuous growth in the number of recipients defined as completely dependent on others; (b) implementation

17 The rates have been valid since January 2009. Until then the rates were 50%, 100% and 150% of the full single person's disability pension.

of the Ben Yehuda Committee recommendation to add the IADL test to the eligibility tests (see box in this chapter). This recommendation was particularly beneficial for the blind and for people suffering from mental problems. (c) The SSA is paid from the 91st day after the disability appears, providing that the claim is submitted within 15 months. Since September 2012, people with medical disability of at least 75% and who have been declared eligible for at least six months, receive the allowance from the 31st day.

In 2014, for the first time in a decade, the growth rate in the number of SSA recipients was higher than the growth in the number of recipients who are completely dependent on others – this is due to the application of the IADL test and certain easements in eligibility conditions, particularly for the blind.

Diagram 3
Change in the Number of SSA Recipients and the Number of Recipients Defined as Completely Dependent, 2005–2014



As stated, most recipients of the allowance received more than one benefit: about 74% also received the general disability pension (regular SSA), and a further 21% were also eligible for the old age pension (SSA for the elderly) (Tables 2 and 7). The high proportion of the elderly is the result of the continuing drop in mortality rates in Israel¹⁸ and the differences in eligibility conditions between the SSA and the nursing benefit¹⁹.

18 See: Ministry of Health (2014): **Leading Causes of Death in Israel 2000-2011**.

19 SSA is a cash benefit and the nursing benefit is usually received in kind.

It is possible to distinguish a different breakdown of disabilities in recipients of SSA compared to recipients of the general disability pension: SSA recipients have more neurological and internal problems and far fewer mental problems or learning disabilities (Tables 5 and 7). One of the explanations is the medical disability threshold for SSA eligibility and the tests that look at difficulties with daily activities and the help required to function at home. Not only that: among recipients of SSA, about half of whom work, it is possible to identify higher frequency of internal or urogenital problems compared to the two other groups of the eligible, as well as lower frequency of learning difficulties or mental problems. The sharp growth in the rate of recipients with sensory problems is attributed to the introduction of the IADL tests.

Table 7
Recipients of Attendance allowance by Group
and the Main Disability (numbers and percentages, December 2014)

Main disability		Total		Group (percentage)		
		Absolute numbers	%	Normal SSA	Special SSA	Elderly SSA
Total	numbers	48,846		36,356	2,134	10,356
	Percentages		100	100	100	100
Mental		3,356	6.9	6.9	0.9	8.1
Learning difficulties		3,853	7.9	10.1	0.4	1.6
Internal		11,372	23.3	21.0	47.0	26.5
Urogenital		3,582	7.3	7.0	14.3	7.2
Neurological		15,293	31.3	30.8	22.8	34.7
Locomotor		3,910	8.0	7.3	5.7	11.0
Sensory		7,364	15.1	16.8	7.8	10.6
Other		116	0.2	0.2	1.1	0.3

About 13% of SSA recipients are entitled to the allowance due to a special medical condition (6,285 out of 48,846) (Table 8)²⁰. The number of recipients increases with age and the 55-64 age group represent about a third of recipients. Among those entirely dependent on others the younger age group is prominent – partly due to the high proportion of people with neurological problems. On the other hand, in the 65+ age group the proportion of recipients under active or transplant treatment is small, since the SSA is only paid for temporary periods on these grounds.

The medical condition of recipients of SSA is more severe that of recipients of the general disability pension: about 62% of them have a medical disability of over 90%²¹ (compared to 18% of the disability pension recipients (Table 9). Half of them are married and about 10% employ a foreign care worker. As expected, among the employers of foreign

20 SSA recipients who are eligible for the allowance on one of the automatic grounds but whose severe medical condition entitles them to a higher rate of allowance are counted as dependent on others.

21 See Table F/1 in the Appendix.

workers, the proportion of people with over 90% disability is even higher – about 71%. A third of the recipients are defined as alone, that is they are not married or they live with a spouse who is also disabled and therefore they are entitled to additional benefits.

Table 8
Recipients of Attendance allowance by Age and Grounds
for Eligibility (absolute numbers and percentages), December 2014

Grounds for eligibility		Total		Age group (percentages)					
		Numbers	%	24-18	34-25	44-35	54-45	64-55	65+
Total	Numbers	48,846		4,003	4,954	5,776	8,360	15,524	10,229
	Percentage		100	8.2	10.1	11.8	17.1	31.8	20.9
Undergoing active treatment		3,228	100	2.0	6.4	14.7	26.3	40.3	10.2
Need dialysis		2,959	100	2.0	6.4	11.7	22.7	36.9	20.3
Have undergone transplant		98	100	7.1	15.3	14.3	22.4	31.6	.
Need help for most ADL		21,535	100	6.9	10.2	12.6	17.9	32.7	19.7
Need help for all ADL		11,239	100	7.5	8.6	10.2	15.4	32.6	25.7
Completely dependent on others		9,787	100	15.8	14.2	11.1	12.5	24.6	21.9

Table 9
Recipients of Attendance allowance by % of
Medical Disability, Family Status, and Employment of Foreign
Care Worker (numbers and percentages), December 2014

Family status	Employs foreign care worker	Total		Medical disability (%)			
		Number	Percent	69-60	79-70	89-80	100-90
Total	Absolute numbers	48,846		4,539	6,241	7,689	30,377
	Percentages		100	9.3	12.8	15.7	62.2
Married	Total	25,431	100	7.5	10.4	16.2	65.9
	Employs foreign worker	2,248	100	4.4	8.8	19.0	67.8
	No foreign worker	23,183	100	7.8	10.5	16.0	65.7
Unmarried	Total	23,415	100	11.3	15.4	15.2	58.2
	Employs foreign worker	2,490	100	4.6	9.5	15.3	70.6
	No foreign worker	20,925	100	12.1	16.1	15.2	56.7

Box 2

Changing Eligibility Tests for Special Services Allowance

The special services allowance is paid to persons living in the community and requiring assistance to look after themselves or their homes. For many years eligibility for the allowance was determined by the ability to perform everyday tasks, as shown by the ADL (Activities of Daily Living) test – washing, dressing, eating, mobility around the

home, personal hygiene. The allowance is also paid to persons requiring supervision to prevent danger to themselves or others.

However, these criteria did not provide a solution for individuals who were independent in terms of mobility, but dependent on others for the activities of running their homes. About two years ago, a public committee led by Prof. Arie Ben Yehuda was set up, to examine inter alia, conditions of eligibility for the allowance. On concluding its work, the Committee recommended the addition of another eligibility test, to examine the ability to run a home – the IADL (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living) test. This test assesses the ability to prepare food, maintain the house, take medication, make institutional and financial arrangements, shop and use appliances. In June 2014 the NII added the IADL test to the other tests of eligibility.

As with the ADL tests, the six actions of the IADL are classified according to four levels of dependence on others: independent, needs some help, needs a great deal of help, and completely dependent. However, the basis for determining eligibility was and remains the ADL degree of dependence, and the IADL test is just another layer. Therefore grading the tests is different: for ADL, independent = 0, some help = 4, considerable help = 8, completely dependent = 12. For IADL: independent = 0, some help = 1, considerable help = 2, completely dependent = 3.

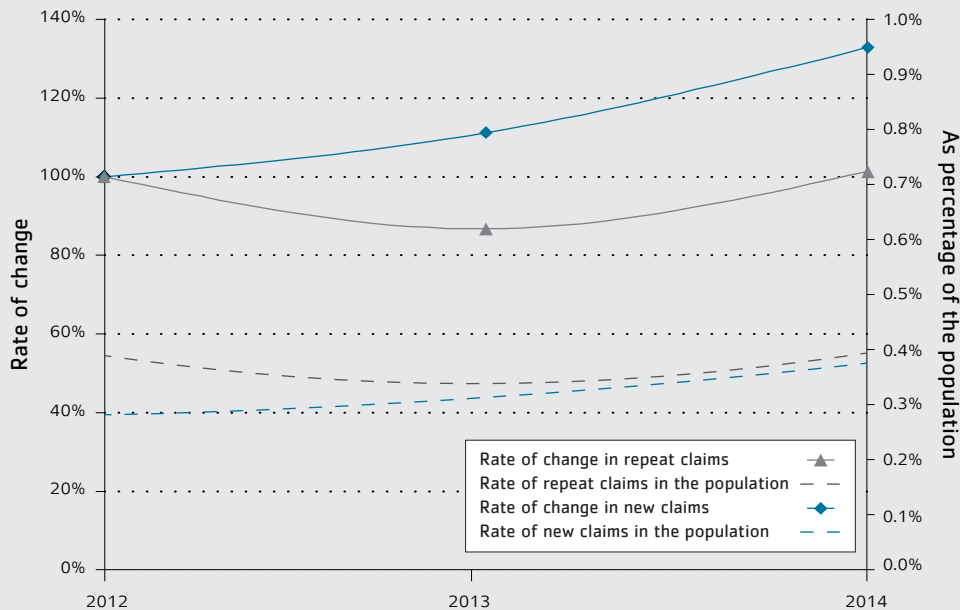
It is important to stress that the automatic eligibility of oncological and dialysis patients and recipients of limb transplants has not been cancelled. Also, on implementation of the recommendations, automatic eligibility was determined for some 4,000 recipients of the disability allowance with at least 90% impaired vision, based on a test done by the Committee which found that they were highly likely to be eligible.

About half a year after the introduction of the amendment, we examined its impact. The first aspect looked at was the number of claims: rates of change in the number of new (first) claims and in the number of repeat claims (due to deterioration in the situation), and rate of claims in the general population of working age¹ (Diagram 1). In 2014 the number of new and repeat claims increased. However, the unusual growth in the number of new claims is entirely explained by the automatic claims initiated by the NII for individuals with impaired vision. It is possible that this was the result of low awareness of rights or fear of applying to the NII.

The second aspect tested was the effect of change on the number of people eligible for the allowance: the annual growth rate in the number of recipients doubled in 2014 (Diagram 2), but even in this case, the growth rate was largely due to the automatic eligibility of the visually impaired

.....
 1 Since the rise in the number of claims is apparently due to the growth in population, this growth has been removed from the data as shown.

Diagram 1
Rate of Change in the Number of New and Repeat Claims,
as a Percentage of the General Working Age Population, 2012–2014



Another interesting aspect is the size of the allowance determined for the newly eligible. Diagram 3 shows the rates of change in the number of newly eligible recipients of the allowance on three levels: slightly dependent (50%), largely dependent (105%), completely dependent (175%). The Ben Yehuda Committee found that the expectation was that people with impaired vision would be entitled to 50% of the allowance, if they had no other disability that impacted their ability to function, so this year a considerable increase was expected in the number of individuals entitled to this rate of the allowance. The rate of change in the number of newly eligible at the two higher levels is half as big – apparently due to the relative increase in the number of the newly eligible at the lowest level, or perhaps because of their ability to carry out tasks of running the household independently.

The last aspect that was looked at was the breakdown in the level of dependence defined for the newly eligible for both ADL and IADL. Most of the newly eligible were defined as slightly dependent on others for eating, washing and dressing (Diagram 4). Most were also independent in terms of mobility at home and personal hygiene. Most needed help to run the home, shop and prepare food, but the majority were independent or only slightly dependent on others to operate appliances, take medication and make arrangements outside the home (Diagram 5).

Diagram 2
Recipients of Special Services Allowance and Annual Rate of Growth in Number of Recipients, 2011-2014

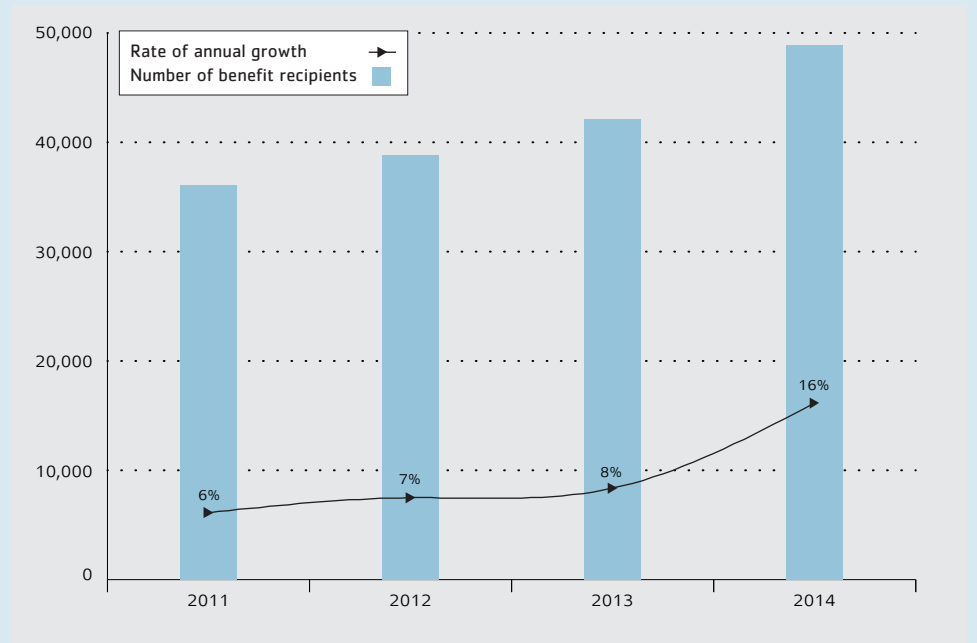


Diagram 3
Change in Percentage Allowance Determined for Newly Eligible Recipients, 2011-2014

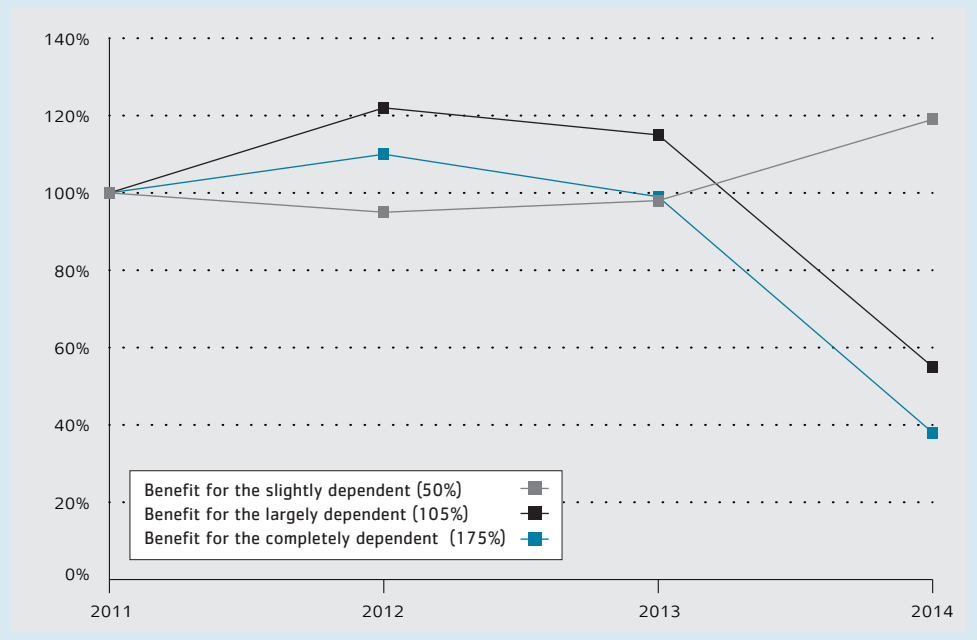


Diagram 4
Level of Dependence Determined for Newly Eligible
for each of the ADL Activities, 2014

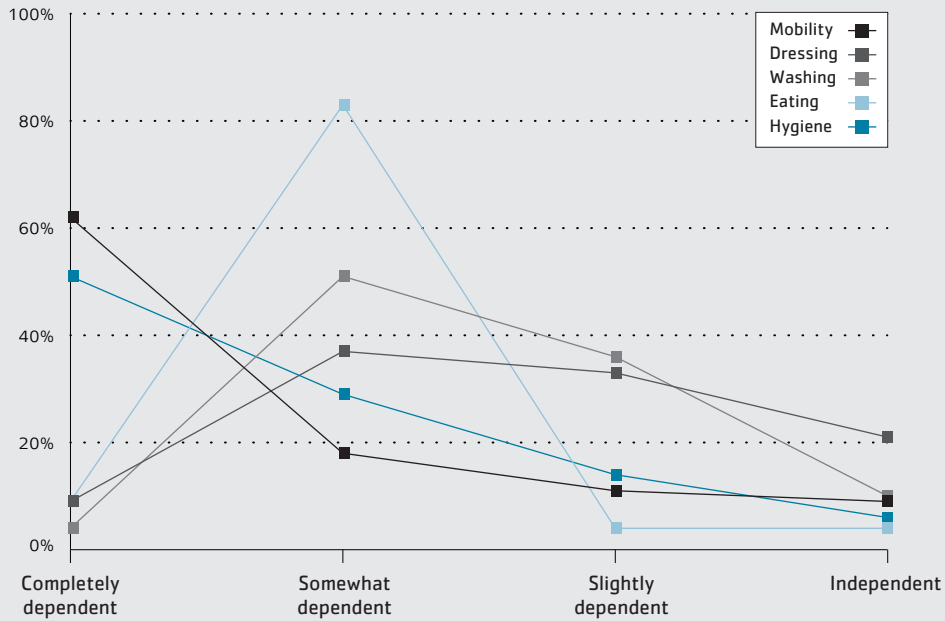
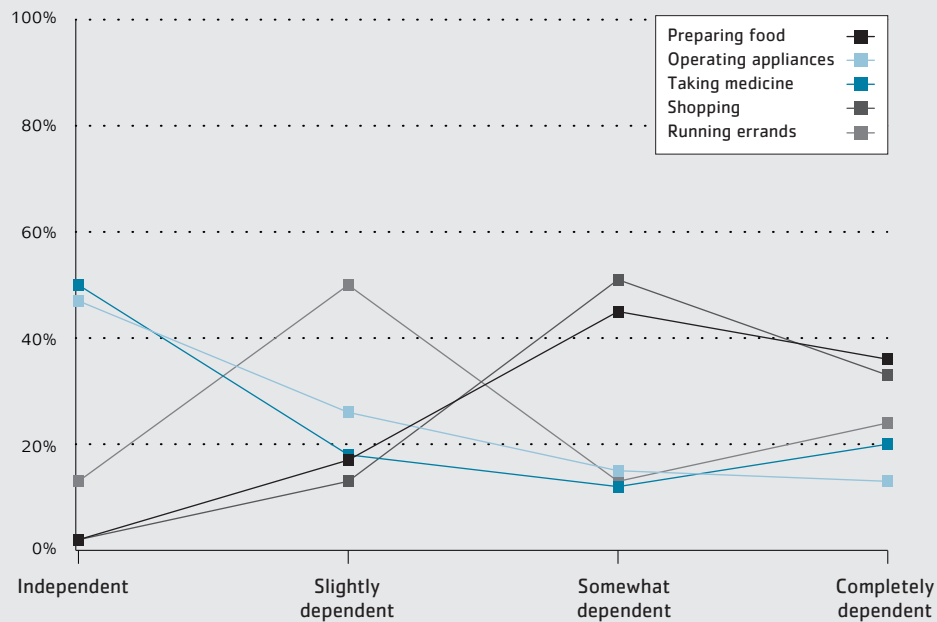


Diagram 5
Level of Dependence Determined for Newly Eligible
for each of the IADL Actions, 2014



D. Disabled Child Benefit

1. Main points of the law

The disabled child benefit is intended to help families caring for a special- needs child with the expenses involved in the child's care and nursing, or with any other treatment intended to improve his/her level of functioning, or to encourage the family to care for the child in the home and community.

There are two stages in determining eligibility for the benefit. In the first stage, the eligibility clerk checks for prior conditions of eligibility: the child, as defined by the National Insurance Act, has not reached the age of 18, is the child of an insured person (or someone who was insured and died while residing in Israel)²², and he/she is not living with a foster family²³ or in an institution (boarding school conditions, where therapy, nursing or rehabilitation is provided)²⁴.

In the second stage, a pediatrician appointed by the NII examines the child and determines whether he/she meets one of the following conditions:

- **He/she is dependent on others:** A child aged 3 or over who, due to illness, syndrome, accident or congenital condition is dependent on the help of others far more than other children of the same age for daily tasks (dressing, eating, washing, personal hygiene, mobility in the home).
- **He/she needs constant supervision:** A child aged 90 days or older, who due to a serious medical condition, severe chronic illness, behavioral disturbance or learning difficulties cannot be left without supervision or who needs the constant presence of others, to prevent harm to himself and others.
- **He/she suffers from a particular disability stipulated in the regulations²⁵:** delayed development, help with communication, deterioration in hearing, vision problems, autism or psychosis, Down's syndrome.
- **He/she requires special medical treatment:** the child has reached the age of 90 days and due to a chronic illness requires special medical treatment (as specified in the law).

In recent years changes have been made in the field of benefits for disabled children, extending the number of eligible children and increasing the monthly allowance paid to them. The most striking changes are the implementation of the Or-Noi Committee recommendations, which increased the number of grounds for eligibility; fixed the supplement for living expenses and help with studies at 20% of the full benefit, and

22 Including stepchildren or adopted children under the age of 18.

23 A foster family caring for a special needs child is eligible for support from the Ministry of Welfare.

24 Except for special cases where the child is kept in an institution while his/her parents pay all expenses.

25 A child who is eligible for a benefit in this category can receive the disabled child benefit from birth.

provided the supplement to all recipients of the benefit; also increasing the benefit rate paid to children entirely dependent on the help of others.

2. Size of the Benefit

According to the regulations, the benefit amount is set at a percentage of the full disability pension for a single person for each type of disability²⁶. There are three levels: 50%, 100% and 128%. A child who meets more than one of the eligibility conditions is entitled to one benefit at the highest rate. The amount of the basic monthly benefit for a child receiving 100% was NIS 2,189 in 2014, to which is added the monthly supplement (AMA) at the rate of 17% of the full single benefit – NIS 372.

A family with two or more children receiving a child disability pension is entitled to a supplement of 50% (of the benefit for each child) for each of the children. A family with two special needs children of whom one is not entitled to a benefit (because he is in an institution, or received the benefit until he reached the age of 18) is also entitled to this supplement.

When children reach the age of 18, they may be eligible for a disability pension or SSA. The NII initiates the claim for them to exercise all their rights. Payment of the benefit continues for three months after their 18th birthday, in order to maintain continuity of payments to the family.

3. Recipients of the Disabled Child Benefit

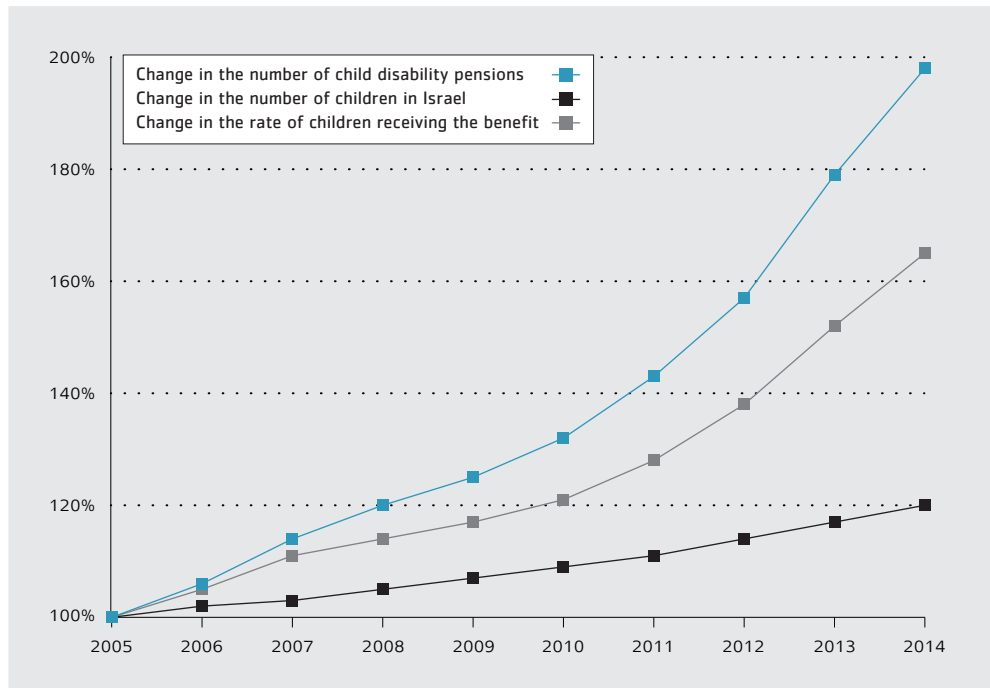
A national survey of children with disabilities, carried out in 1995-1997 by the NII and the Joint- Brookdale Institute, found that 7.7% of children in Israel have a chronic function problem or need regular medical treatment for a year or more. According to this estimate, in December 2014 there were about 210,000 children in Israel with special needs, and 42,063 of them received the disabled child benefit – an increase of 11% compared to 2013. The rate of change in the numbers of child disability pension recipients is higher than the rate of change in the number of all children in Israel (Diagram 4) for three main reasons: (a) implementation of the Or-Noi Committee conclusions; (b) restoration of supervision to the list of grounds for eligibility (the number of children requiring supervision doubled over the last year); (c) the increase in the number of children diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum in Israel.

Like the breakdown of all children in Israel with special needs²⁷, about 2/3 of recipients of the child disability pension are boys (Table 10), largely due to the greater frequency of autism among boys. The main ages of eligibility are 6-13, due to the definitions of

26 Unlike the disability pension, which is affected by medical disability and the degree of incapacity, there is no difference between children eligible for the benefit on the same grounds. Benefit rates are given in the National Insurance Regulations (Disabled Child), 5770-2010, Section 2: Special Services Allowance.

27 Naon et al. (2000): Children with Special Needs: Estimate of needs and their coverage by the Services. Joint-Brookdale Institute and the National Insurance Institute.

Diagram 4
Recipients of Child Disability pension and Development
in the Child Population, 2005-2014



eligibility, which examine the burden placed on parents by caring for the child, compared to the normal situation for children of the same age²⁸, which is also affected by the minimum age specified in the regulations for some of the grounds.

Caring for a child with special needs can be hard on parents, and caring for more than one disabled child is very much harder. In 2014 there were 2,497 families with more than one child receiving child disability pensions – 30% more than the same period in 2013 (a total of 6,901 children); 317 of these families have at least three children with special needs. The breakdown of the most common disabilities among these children shows that about 25% of the families have two or more children with autism, about 19% have children with hearing problems, about 5% have children with vision problems, and about 35% have children who are dependent on the help of others or need constant presence/supervision to prevent danger to themselves or others.

About 2% of recipients employ a foreign worker; 60% of these are completely dependent on others for all daily activities (they can be identified by the rate of the benefit – 128%) (Table 11). The proportion of children whose families receive the family

28 Because of natural child development, limitations have more impact when the child is young, and tends to decrease as the child matures.

Table 10
Recipients of Child Disability pension, by Age, Sex
and Eligibility Group (absolute numbers and percentages), December 2014

Sex	Eligibility group	Total		Age (percentage)				
		Number	Percent	Up to 3	3-5	6-9	10-13	14-17
Total	Number	42,063		3,120	7,687	10,461	10,752	10,043
	Percentage		100	100	100	100	100	100
Boys	Total	27,550	65.5	59.0	66.5	68.5	65.8	63.3
	Dependent on help of others	4,521	10.8	.	7.4	11.4	12.5	14.1
	Need regular supervision/ presence	5,662	13.5	13.9	12.5	15.4	14.0	11.4
	Have a special disability	13,822	32.9	29.2	39.1	34.2	31.5	29.4
	Need special medical treatment	3,545	8.4	15.8	7.4	7.6	7.8	8.4
Girls	Total	14,513	34.5	41.0	33.5	31.5	34.2	36.7
	Dependent on help of others	3,194	7.6	.	6.1	6.9	9.3	10.4
	Need regular supervision/ presence	3,067	7.3	10.5	7.8	7.0	6.8	6.7
	Have a special disability	5,402	12.8	18.7	14.0	11.5	11.5	13.0
	Need special medical treatment	2,850	6.8	11.9	6.1	6.0	6.7	6.6

supplement is almost the same whether or not they employ a foreign worker, but in 2014 the number of families receiving the supplement whose children are completely dependent on others and who employ a foreign care worker increased by about 5%. It is possible that increasing the benefit has enabled more families to fund the cost of such a worker.

Table 11
Recipients of Child Disability pension by Rate of Basic Benefit,
Source of Help, and Number of Disabled Children in the Family
(numbers and percentages), December 2014

Employment of foreign worker		Total		Rate of basic benefit (%)		
		Number	%	50%	100%	128%
Total	Numbers	42,063		12,106	24,557	5,400
	Percentage		100	28.8	58.4	12.8
Employ foreign worker	Total	846	100	3.1	36.3	60.6
	Of whom: receive increased benefit for families with disabled children	117	100	3.4	40.2	56.4
Do not employ a foreign worker	Total	41,217	100	29.3	58.8	11.9
	Of whom: receive increased benefit for families with disabled children	6,363	100	22.5	65.8	11.7

Box 1

Adults with Autism – Integration into Society and Work, 2003–2014¹

Since the introduction of the Disabled Child Regulations in 1981, under certain circumstances children on the autistic spectrum have been entitled to an allowance from the NII. Since 2006, following an appeal to the Supreme Court filed by the National Union for Autistic Children (NUAC) and the Association for Children at Risk, it was decided that all children with autism are entitled to a benefit, even if it is not proven that they are dependent on help from others.

Autism includes cognitive and perceptual disabilities, and autistic children are characterized by difficulties in the areas of communication, behavior and social relationships. Nevertheless, this disability finds expression in different forms for each child, and the differences can be very great.

In this box we present data on the adult lives of those children who were recognized as eligible for the national insurance disabled child benefit until age 18.

The normal course for an Israeli youth from the age of 18 involves military service, the pursuit of higher education, work, marriage and parenthood. These milestones affect NII rights and obligations.

Over the last decade, on average 70% of boys and 58% of girls in Israel have enlisted in the IDF (figures from the IDF Recruitment Administration). Some 39% of boys and 52% of girls who finish high school, continue to higher education, and up to the age of 30, about 15% of men and 20% of women get married. The median age for marriage is 28 for men and 26 for women (figures from the CBS).

From January 2003 to December 2013 1,404 adolescents who were entitled to a disabled child benefit due to autism reached the age of 18. Table 1 shows the percentage of adolescents in each year by the following characteristics: recipients of general disability benefit, recipients of special services allowance, enlistment to the IDF, volunteered for national service, participation in one of the NII's Rehabilitation Division work preparation courses, participated in academic studies, found work in the open market, married and became parents.

The data presented here are based on NII figures. They show that the earlier the child was born, the greater the chances of reaching one of the later milestones under examination, since there are more potential years. However, there are figures that contradict this trend.

About 89% of recipients of the disabled child benefit due to autism continued to receive a general disability allowance from the NII, an average of NIS 2,360 per month,

1 The information shown here is intended to enable an estimate of at least some of the economic costs of autism.

Table 1
Recipients of Disabled Child Allowance due to Autism who reached the Age of 18, by Year of Birth, Type of Benefit and Life Milestones, 2003-2014

Year of birth		Received disabled child benefit (numbers)	Benefit (%)			Life milestones (percentages)					
			General disability	Special services	Joined IDF	Nat'l Service	Vocational training	Academic studies	Found work	Married	Parents
Total	Numbers	1,404	1,248	345	147	138	80	66	399	16	6
	Percent		89	25	10	10	6	5	28	1	0
1985		28	100	43	4	0	14	0	64	0	0
1986		35	100	20	0	20	17	6	63	3	0
1987		49	96	27	4	8	18	10	53	2	2
1988		69	97	29	10	14	13	9	46	4	0
1989		75	93	25	13	13	17	15	52	1	0
1990		104	91	28	9	12	13	8	51	2	2
1991		121	90	21	11	16	3	6	30	3	2
1992		155	90	23	14	11	7	7	24	1	0
1993		200	86	25	16	13	4	4	23	1	1
1994		249	89	24	13	10	1	2	18	0	0
1995		319	83	24	6	3	0	1	14	0	0

where the proportion of those eligible decreases relative to year of birth (Table 1). The reason is apparently the level of recipients' functioning in the early years compared to the level of those eligible in the later years: as the level of autism awareness rose and the conditions of eligibility for the benefit were relaxed, so eligibility was extended to children with a higher functioning level which did not necessarily affect their earnings ability after the age of 18. A hint of this can be found in the slight decrease in the proportion of those eligible for the special services allowance (given to people dependent on the help of others) over the years.

The proportion enlisting in the IDF grew over the years, together with a decrease in those volunteering for National Service. One of the explanations for this could be greater recent openness in the IDF towards children with special needs, cancellation of the sweeping exemption from military service given to all autistic children in 2008, and the launch of special enlistment tracks for such children, which catered for youngsters who had previously volunteered for National Service. Autistic children born before 1990 who served in the army apparently did so on a volunteer track. Nevertheless, the median number of months of military service for these youths is 24 months, and for National Service – 12 months.

Among those born in 1985-1990, on average some 16% were integrated into one of the work preparation programs run by the NII's Rehabilitation Division, and some of them even did so in the framework of academic studies. Not only that: about 55%

on average of autistic children in those years found work on the open market with employer-employee relationships. We have no data on their job size (full- or part-time), but we can say that they worked on average for 14 months and earned about NIS 1,500 per month. The most interesting figure is that 90% of those who found work did so with no academic background. A minority married and had children.

We also examined the median age of reaching each of these life milestones (Table 2). The median age of enlisting in the army or volunteering for National Service is 19. It could perhaps be claimed that this is due to continuing studies, but the median age of starting work is lower (about 18), with no significant difference between boys and girls. It is possible that before enlisting in the army, these youngsters participated in the program preparing them for this new framework, among other things also through integration into work. The median age of joining work preparation programs or those for academic studies is 20 for boys, and 22 and 19 (respectively) for girls – earlier than youngsters without autism, apparently due to their shorter military service (if any). They also tend to marry younger than the average for the whole population.

Within a few years, the changes that were introduced in 2006 in the conditions of eligibility for the Disabled Child Benefit on grounds of autism are expected to improve the figures for the integration of these children into society after the age of 18, and the proportion of high functioning children with autism is only expected to rise.

Table 2
Recipients of Disabled Child Benefit due to Autism who Reached the Age of 18, by Median Age for Reaching each Life Stage, 2003-2014

Median starting age	Gender	
	Boys	Girls
Enlisting in the army	19	19
National Service	19	19
Vocational rehabilitation	20	22
Academic studies	20	19
Work	18	19
Marriage	20	20
Parenthood	21	23

E. Mobility Allowance

1. Main points of the law

The mobility allowance grants benefits to disabled persons with leg problems that limit their mobility. The benefit is paid from the state treasury pursuant to an agreement signed by the Ministry of Finance and the NII.

An individual with mobility problems is defined as one who is a resident of Israel aged 3-67, who has been designated by a Ministry of Health Medical Committee as having at least 40% permanent mobility restriction - for holders of a valid driving license, or at least 60% for those without a driving license.

Such individuals are given the following benefits:

- **Monthly allowance** – participation in the expenses of using a vehicle²⁹ (for car owners) or mobility (for those without cars)³⁰. If the distance from the disabled person's home to his workplace is more than 40km he/she is entitled to a supplement. Only persons with restricted mobility who are defined as earning money from work are entitled to the full allowance³¹.
- **Standing loan** – given to the purchaser of a new car, to provide full or partial funding of the applicable taxes³². The loan amount will equal the taxes on the specific car (as defined in the law) specified for the disabled person, according to his/her level of restricted mobility, and no more than the total taxes for the car in question. The loan is repaid to the NII subject to defined rules.
- **Loan fund** – a disabled person who, according to a medical committee, needs and uses a wheelchair and the Medical Institute for Road Safety has determined that he needs a special equipment vehicle³³; or his/her mobility is restricted by at least 90%; a driving license holder who is studying/working/undergoing rehabilitation – is eligible for help in purchasing the first car equal to 80% of the car's value, excluding taxes³⁴.
- **A loan to purchase and install equipment in the car**³⁵ – anyone who needs and uses a wheelchair is eligible for a loan to purchase the special equipment required for the car, if the Medical Institute for Road Safety determines that he/she needs a special equipment vehicle. If he/she has a suitable vehicle – h/shee is also entitled to assistance in purchasing a lifting device.
- **Reimbursement of the cost of purchasing and installing special equipment in a private car** – if the Medical Institute for Road Safety determines that a restricted mobility holder of a valid driving license needs additional special equipment for

29 Costs of fuel, car insurance and its special equipment, repairs, services and theft protection devices.

30 The allowance is updated from time to time based on increases in the cost of running a car.

31 A restricted mobility earner is one who works and earns at least 25% of the average wage, or has 80% or more restricted mobility, or who is entitled to a car for special equipment. A non-earning person with restricted mobility is entitled to 50% of the full allowance.

32 A standing loan to replace a car is given to restricted mobility persons who hold a driving license only if 42 months have passed since they received the previous loan; for those without a driving license – only if 48 months have passed; for owners of cars with special equipment – only if 60 months have passed since they received the previous loan. If the car is stolen or wrecked in an accident or there is a deterioration in the recipient's medical condition and the Medical Institute confirms that the car must be replaced, a new standing loan may be obtained.

33 A special equipment vehicle is a one that can be entered or driven while sitting in a wheelchair.

34 These amounts become a grant after 5 years.

35 The loan is for 95% of the cost of the equipment and its installation, including applicable taxes, and is only given for new equipment.

driving purposes, safety while driving and to use the car, he/she is eligible for reimbursement of the costs of such special equipment.

These benefits for mobility-restricted individuals do not stop when they reach the age of 67, but in situations where they are entitled to participation in mobility costs by virtue of other laws, their eligibility for the benefits under the Mobility Agreement is terminated.

In the following cases, the restricted mobility individual is not entitled to the above benefits, and must choose between: (a) receiving the Attendance allowance at a rate of less than 100% without having been defined as possessing 100% restricted mobility, or not needing or using a wheelchair; (b) a child receiving the child disability benefit who is younger than 3, or who is aged 3 and over and has not been defined as having over 80% restricted mobility, or does not need or use a wheelchair.

A family with two or more children who have been defined as having at least 80% restricted mobility or have been defined as unable to walk unaided and are living in the same home, may be eligible for both the child disability benefit and those pursuant to the Mobility Agreement, even if the children have not yet reached the age of 3.

2. Recipients of Mobility Allowance

In December 2014, 37,335 people received the benefits – an increase of about 3.5% compared to 2013. About 69% of the recipients received an additional allowance from the Disability Branch (Tables 2 and 3), and another 2,185 were eligible for a disability pension from the Victims of Work Accidents Branch. It may be assumed that the remaining eligible persons who do not receive an additional benefit are earning a high income that precludes their eligibility or are forced to waive other benefits due to duplication with mobility benefits.

An examination of the benefits for people with restricted mobility in other western countries shows that only a few have a special benefit for restricted mobility like that in Israel. The main explanation for this is the poor quality of accessible public transport in Israel compared to many countries and the numerous options available there: interurban and urban railways, buses and transport services – urban, interurban and specific. Another explanation is that in most countries the benefits for persons with restricted mobility are included in the benefits paid to those who are dependent on others (comparable to the SSA in Israel). In comparison to countries where a separate benefit is paid to persons with restricted mobility, Israel is by far the leader in the western world in the range and scope of the benefits paid. Part of this is apparently due to the high cost of buying and maintaining a car in here.

As stated, the scope of the benefits paid to persons of restricted mobility in Israel depend on whether they own a car, the size of the car determined for them (classified by engine size) and their degree of independence (able to drive or not). About 80% of

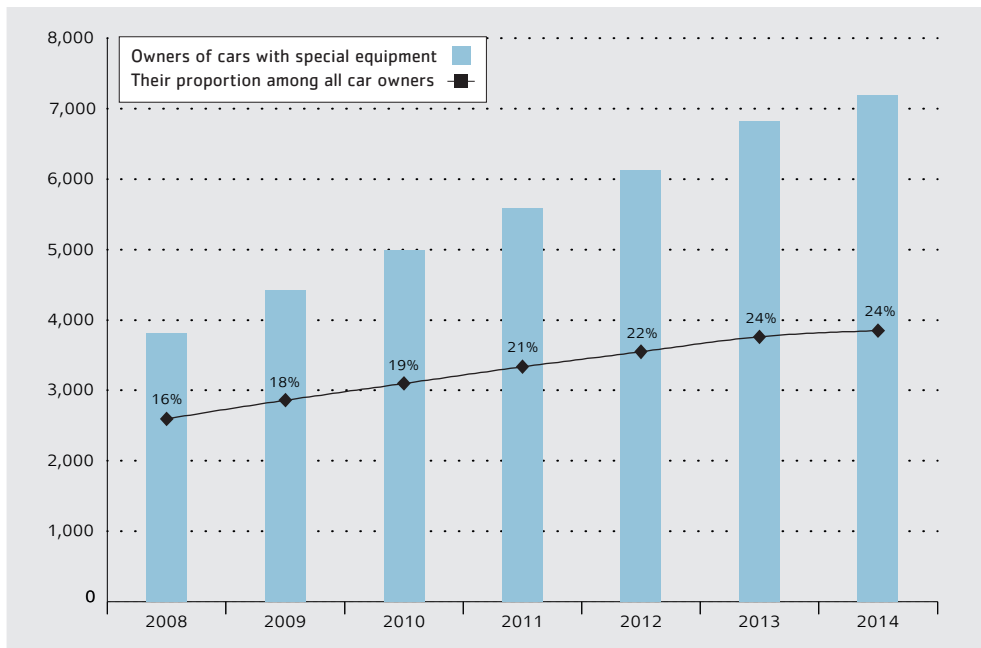
persons with restricted mobility are eligible for an allowance as car owners, and about 35% of them have a small car (up to 1300cc engine size) (Table 12). About 71% of the car owners are able to drive themselves. The exceptions are owners of vans, most of whom do not drive themselves – because of their severe medical condition and dependence on wheelchairs.

In recent years the proportion of restricted mobility car owners has decreased while the proportion of owners of cars with special equipment has increased, partly due to the

Table 12
Recipients of a Mobility Allowance by Driving, Ownership
of Car and Car Size (numbers and percentages), December 2014

Car ownership		Engine size	Total		Driving (%)	
			Numbers	Percent	Self driver	Non driver
Total	Absolute numbers		37,335		21,108	16,227
	Percent			100	56.5	43.5
Car owners		1300	10,554	100	79.2	20.8
		1800	10,103	100	87.6	12.4
		2000	1,740	100	79.9	20.1
		2500	306	100	98.0	2.0
		Vans	7,190	100	30.6	69.4
No car			7,442	100	.	100

Diagram 5
Owners of Cars with Special Equipment
and Their Proportion of all Car Owners, 2008-2014



extent of benefits for owners of such vehicles (Diagram 5). This naturally increases public expenditure on mobility insurance.

The degree of dependence on a wheelchair has a decisive effect on the rate of mobility and the size of car determined for the individual. About 92% of people of both sexes confined to wheelchairs, and another 50% of those who need and use one, have more than 90% restricted mobility. The high proportion of men eligible for the allowance is striking (Table 13).

Table 13
Recipients of Mobility Allowance by Percentage Restriction, Sex and Dependence on Wheelchairs (numbers and percentages), December 2014

Sex	Dependence on wheelchair	Total		Mobility restriction (percent)					
		Number	%	49-40	59-50	69-60	79-70	89-80	100-90
Total	Numbers	37,335		3,464	3,496	3,236	4,301	9,857	12,981
	Percent		100	9	9	9	12	26	35
Men	Total	23,084	100	11	10	9	12	26	32
	Confined	4,319	100	0	0	0	0	8	91
	Need and use	5,502	100	2	2	6	6	36	49
Woman	No wheelchair	13,263	100	18	16	13	18	28	7
	Total	14,251	100	6	9	8	11	27	39
	Confined	3,145	100	0	0	0	0	7	92
	Need and use	4,070	100	1	2	6	6	35	50
	No wheelchair	7,036	100	12	16	13	19	31	8

About a third of recipients are not of working age. About 12% of them are children, and 20% elderly (Table 14). Most suffer from paralysis of the lower limbs (67%). The younger the age, the higher the proportion of paralyzed recipients and the lower the

Table 14
Recipients of Mobility Allowance by Age and Main Disability (numbers and percentages), December 2014

Main disability		Totals		Age group (percentage)						
		Number	Percent	17-3	29-18	39-30	49-40	59-50	66-60	67+
Total	Numbers	37,335		4,545	3,419	3,462	4,149	6,782	8,095	6,883
	Percentage		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Paralysis		25,135	67	96	87	76	67	62	61	47
Restricted movement		4,902	13	1	5	10	13	15	17	21
Artery insufficiency		1,897	5	.	0	0	2	5	8	12
Amputation		1,603	4	1	2	4	6	6	4	6
Fractures		1,303	3	1	2	4	6	5	3	4
False joints		1,045	3	0	1	2	3	3	3	5
Sclerosis		926	2	0	1	2	3	3	2	5
Other		340	1	1	3	2	1	1	0	0

proportion of those suffering from other disabilities. This is because the older recipients also suffer from conditions that get worse with age, while most of the children suffer from congenital conditions.

The mobility allowance is intended, among other things, to enable recipients to lead a normal lifestyle, including integrating into the workforce. Therefore if the distance to and from their work is more than 40km, they are entitled to a supplement as compensation for their additional fuel costs. However, only some 17% of the benefit recipients work, most of them close to their homes, (18% of working recipients receive the supplement due to the distance between their homes and workplaces).

F. Compensation for sufferers of scalp ringworm

1. Main points of the law

Scalp ringworm (*Tinea Capitis*) is a fungal skin condition that generally causes skin discoloration and itching. Today the condition is treated with pills or creams, but until 1959 there was no effective medication and X-ray radiation was used, with what turned out to be serious side effects.

In 1994 the Knesset passed the law on compensation for victims of the disease, intended to compensate patients who were treated with radiation from 1.1.1946 to 31.12.1960, by the State, the Jewish Agency, Health Service Providers or Hadassah Medical Federation. Compensation is funded by the State treasury and paid by the NII.

According to law, eligibility applies to residents of Israel who suffered from scalp ringworm and for whom a committee of experts has decided that due to the radiation treatment they received, they suffer from various cancers of the head and neck, or from benign brain tumors or from leukemia, or they have hair loss around the scars on the scalp, and whose degree of medical disability is 5% or more.

Below are the amounts paid to victims of scalp ringworm (as of 2014):

- **Monthly allowance:** A patient with 40% or more medical disability is eligible for a monthly allowance equal to 25% of the average wage (pursuant to the National Insurance Act) times the percentage disability. A patient with 100% disability receives NIS 2,272.
- **One-time compensation:** A patient with 75% or more medical disability is entitled to a payment of NIS 187,518. A patient with 40%-74% disability is entitled to half this amount – NIS 93,759.
- **Grant instead of allowance:** A patient with 5%-39% disability is entitled to a one-time grant calculated as a percentage of the full allowance (according to the patient's degree of disability) times 70.
- **Survivors' grant:** The spouse of a patient who has a child is entitled to a grant equal to 36 full monthly allowances – NIS 81,792. The spouse of a patient with no children

or the patient's child is entitled to 60% of the full compensation to survivors – NIS 49,075.

2. Recipients of the Allowance

At the end of 2014 there were 4,394 recipients of the monthly allowance for victims of scalp ringworm (Table 15). 242 of them first began to receive the allowance in 2014. The average age of eligible persons (69.1) is quite high due to the periods of eligibility stipulated by law. Unlike most benefits paid by the Disability Branch, most recipients of this benefit (about 61%) are women, apparently due to their longer average life expectancy.

Table 15
Victims of Scalp Ringworm Receiving Monthly Allowance,
by Age and Sex (numbers and percentages), December 2014.

Sex		Total	Age group (percentage)			
			59-50	64-60	69-65	70+
Total:	Numbers	4,394	155	1,029	1,492	1,718
	Percentage	100	100	100	100	100
Men		39	38	34	39	43
Women		61	62	66	61	57

Most recipients of the allowance suffer from skin damage (62%) and have a low degree of disability, and some 16% have an internal problem and a high degree of disability (usually severe forms of cancer) (Table 16). Apart from the differences in degree of disability, there are apparently also differences in life expectancy between these groups of patients.

Table 16
Sufferers of Scalp Ringworm Receiving a Monthly Benefit,
by Percent Medical Disability and Effective Disability³⁶
(numbers and percent) December 2014

Effective disability		Total		Medical disability (percent)			
		Number	Percent	49-40	59-50	79-60	100-80
Total	Numbers	4,394		1,834	917	1,034	609
	Percentage	100	100	100	100	100	
Skin damage	Skin scars	1,920	44	52	50	38	18
	Baldness	803	18	33	14	6	1
Internal	Lymph glands	446	10	1	8	17	32
	Other	262	6	6	7	6	4
Neurological		922	21	8	19	32	42
Other		41	1	0	1	1	3

36 It is important to note that the effective disability is not necessarily the dominant one. For example, about 29% of recipients have a dominant mental condition, which is not expressed in Table 16.

Diagram 6
Recipients of Grants for Victims of Scalp Ringworm
and Total Payments, 2001–2014

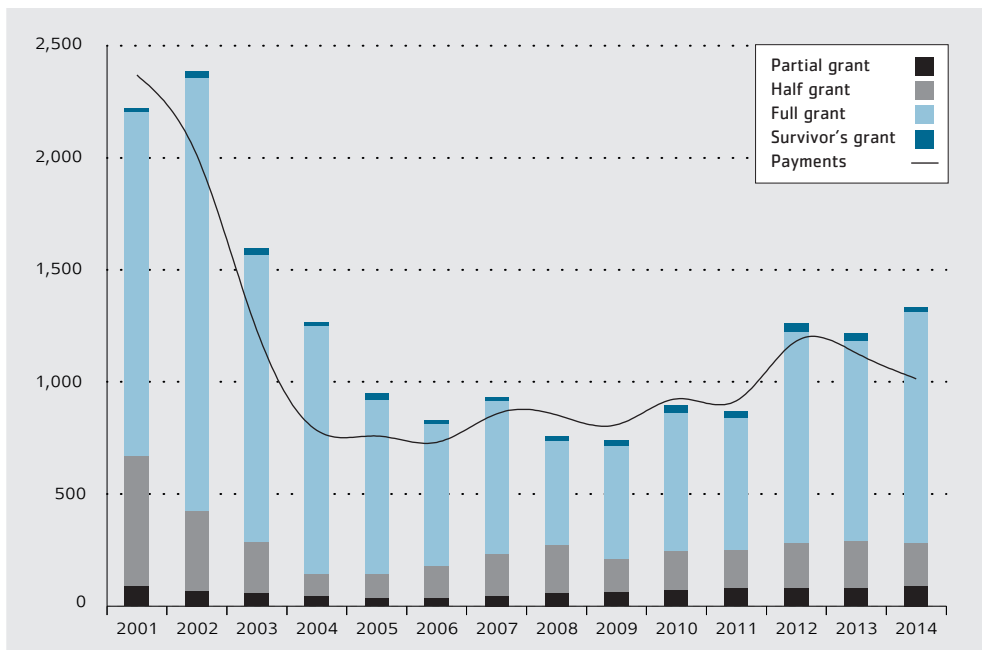


Diagram 6 shows the breakdown of compensation payments to victims of scalp ringworm and the number of recipients. The payments shown are credited to the year in which paid, but any patient who was approved a higher rate of medical disability after a repeat claim is counted as eligible for compensation at the new date. From 2002, when the law matured, the number of recipients of compensation or grants for scalp ringworm declined until 2011, but in the last two years it has started to rise again – perhaps due to greater uptake of rights. The low rate of recipients with high rates of medical disability can also be seen in the low rate of recipients of full compensation.

G. Compensation for Polio Victims

1. Main points of the law

Poliomyelitis or polio affects the locomotive nerve cells in the spine, and thus damages nerve fibers and muscles. About half of patients recover completely from the virus, while about half suffer various degrees of disability. The Compensation for Polio Victims Act was passed by the Knesset in 2007. According to this law, anyone who contracted polio within the borders of the State of Israel, or received treatment here before the end of 1969³⁷, and a qualified doctor on behalf of the NI determined that he/she is

³⁷ Until February 2012, only patients who contracted the disease in Israel were entitled to compensation.

suffering from medical disability or restricted mobility due to the disease or subsequent deterioration (post-polio syndrome), is eligible for compensation.

The following benefits are paid to polio victims (correct as of 2014):

- **Monthly allowance:** anyone with 20% or more medical disability is entitled to a monthly allowance according to the rate of medical disability. The full allowance is 50% of the average wage (as defined in the law) – NIS 4,545.
- **One-time compensation:** for anyone with a permanent degree of medical disability – up to 74%, compensation of NIS 60,465; for 75-94%, compensation of NIS 120,933; more than 95%, NIS 145,119.
- **Grant instead of allowance:** A patient with less than 20% medical disability is entitled to a one-time grant relative to the patient's degree of disability (out of the full monthly allowance) times 70.

In addition to these payments, the State helps to fund medical treatments, special equipment and medical devices required by polio patients to lead a normal life and which are not included in the health basket. It is important to note that eligibility for compensation under the Polio Act does not detract from rights in other areas of national insurance benefits.

2. Recipients of polio victims' allowance

In December 2014 the number of recipients reached 4,251 – almost unchanged since 2013; about 55% were men and the remainder women. The stability in the number of recipients can also be seen in the number of first time recipients – only 84. 74% of recipients also receive at least one other benefit from the Disability Branch (Table 3).

Most polio victims contracted the disease in the early days of the State, before the polio vaccine was introduced in 1961. However, a few cases did appear after that, apparently in children or adults who were not vaccinated (Table 17). This finding can explain the relatively high average age of benefit recipients – 62.7. The remainder are

Table 17
Polio Victims Receiving Monthly Allowance, by Age and When the Disease Appeared (numbers and percentages), December 2014

When Disease Appeared		Total		Sex (%)	
		Number	Percent	Men	Women
Total	Number	4,251		2,363	1,888
	Percent		100	100	100
Before State established		442	10	10	11
1959-1948		3,132	74	72	76
1969-1960		399	9	11	8
1979-1970		161	4	4	3
1980 to present		117	3	3	3

Table 18
Polio Victims Receiving Monthly Allowance, by Effective Disability and Percentage Medical Disability (numbers and percent), December 2014

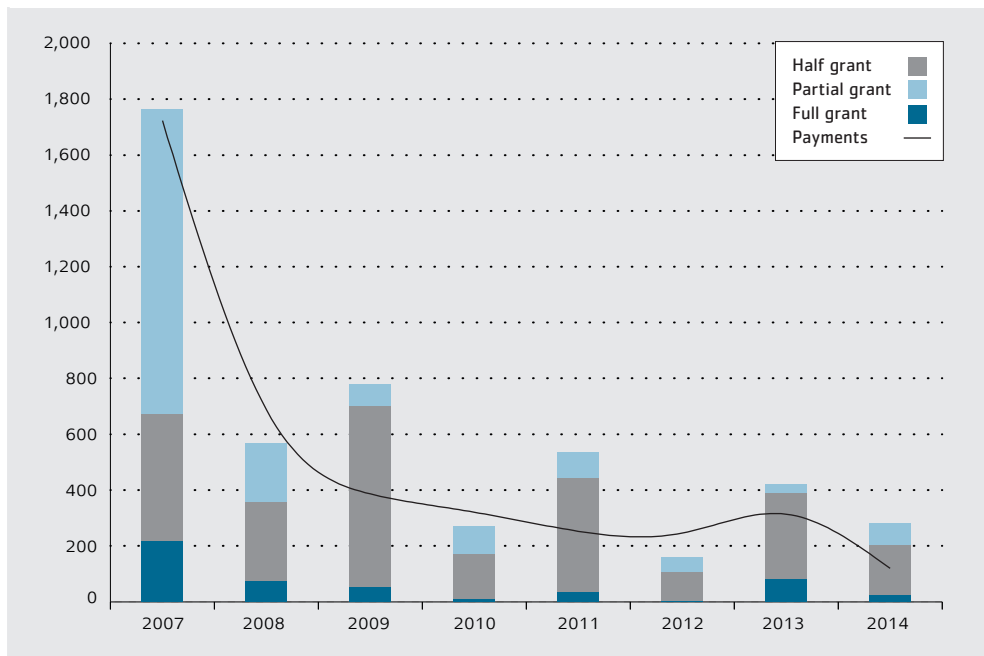
Effective disability		Total		Medical disability (percent)					
		Number	Percent	49-20	59-50	69-60	79-70	89-80	100-90
Total	Numbers	4,251		961	479	294	176	1,348	993
	Percentage		100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Cranial nerve problems		722	17	11	13	15	15	12	32
Paralysis of limb nerves		1,044	25	65	27	48	38	5	2
Bone diseases & damage		365	9	16	8	11	8	5	6
Post-polio		2,120	50	8	53	26	39	78	60

mainly people who contracted the disease outside Israel and were treated here, or who experienced a late attack of the disease, including those who were not vaccinated.

About 50% of recipients suffer from post-polio syndrome, which can appear up to 45 years after infection with the virus. We can also see a link between the type of disability and its severity: the proportion of people with a high rate of medical disability who suffer problems with the cranial (skull) nerves and post-polio syndrome is higher than the rate of sufferers of limb paralysis and bone damage.

Since the law came into force, the total grant payment has shrunk each year. However, there are fluctuations in the number of recipients, since anyone who is determined to

Diagram 7
Recipients of Grants for Polio Victims and Total Payments, 2007-2014



have a higher degree of medical disability after a repeat claim is counted as eligible for compensation at the renewed eligibility date. It is worth noting the gap between the rate of polio victims who receive both the monthly allowance and the one-time grant (about 90% of all recipients) and the rate of scalp ringworm sufferers who receive both payments (about 23% of all recipients) – apparently because of the more generous conditions of eligibility under the Polio Act.

H. Payments

In 2014, the Disability Branch paid benefits amounting to about NIS 13 billion – a real increase of 6% compared to 2013. The main increase is explained by reform in eligibility tests for SSA. The breakdown of expenditure in the branch by type of payment shows that the relative weight of payments for disability pensions and rehabilitation continued to fall in 2014, reaching about 67% of Branch expenditure (Table 19). The main reason for this is the relative growth in the size of other benefits – special services, child disability and mobility. Total payment for scalp ringworm victims was about NIS 115 million in 2014, and about NIS 235 million for polio victims.

Table 19
General Disability Branch Payments by Type (percent), 2010–2014

Year	Total	Disability & rehabilitation	Special services	Disabled child	Mobility
2010	100	70.6	9.3	7.8	11.6
2011	100	69.3	9.9	8.5	11.6
2012	100	67.8	10.3	9.2	12.0
2013	100	66.8	10.8	9.9	11.6
2014	100	66.1	11.3	10.4	11.3

Benefit payments in the Disability Branch as a percentage of all NII benefit payments grew compared to 2013 and reached 18.7%, similar to the proportion in previous years (Table 20).

Table 20
General Disability Payments as a Percent of All NII Benefits, 2010–2014

Year	General Disability Branch Payments		Branch payments as a % of all benefit payments
	NIS millions (2014 prices)	Real annual rate of growth (%)	
2010	11,144,634	5.0	18.6
2011	11,225,382	0.7	18.4
2012	11,890,840	5.9	17.8
2013	12,309,113	3.2	18.7
2014	13,037,774	5.9	18.6

As a rule, in 2014 the erosion of disability pensions (general disability, SSA and disabled child) continued compared to the average wage – a result of differences between mechanisms for updating benefits and growth in wages.

The average disability pension (including the additional benefit) is affected by many variables: (a) the proportion of recipients eligible for the full benefit; (b) the proportion who are eligible for a supplement for their dependents; (c) the proportion who have income from work or income not from work; (d) the proportion who receive an encouragement allowance. In 2014 the average benefit was NIS 2,867 per month – 35% of the average wage (Table 21).

Table 21
Average Monthly Disability pension (current prices, fixed prices, and as a percentage of the average wage), 2010–2014

Year	Current prices (NIS)	2014 prices (NIS)	Percent of the average wage
2010	2,658	2,833	32.2
2011	2,710	2,792	31.6
2012	2,774	2,810	31.5
2013	2,807	2,793	31.5
2014	2,867	2,867	31.3

The average allowance for special services (including the additional benefit) in 2014 was NIS 2,467 (Table 22). The decrease in the average benefit was inter alia a result of the rate of the newly eligible at the lowest level.

Table 22
Average Monthly SSA (current prices, fixed prices and as a percentage of the average wage), 2010–2014

Year	Current prices (NIS)	2014 prices (NIS)	Percent of the average wage
2010	2,324	2,478	28.2
2011	2,383	2,455	27.8
2012	2,449	2,481	27.8
2013	2,482	2,470	27.8
2014	2,467	2,467	26.9

The average size of the benefit for a disabled child (including the additional allowance) was affected by three recent changes: (a) combining the supplement for study and the living allowance, on the recommendation of the Or-Noi Committee, and payment of the study supplement to all the benefit recipients³⁸; (b) a rise in the number of recipients who are completely dependent on others; (c) the massive growth in recipients who need supervision. In 2014 the average benefit payment was NIS 2,414, 26.4% of the average wage – a real drop of 0.5% over 2013 (Table 23).

Table 23
Average Monthly Child Disability pension (current prices, fixed prices and as a percentage of the average wage), 2010–2014

Year	Current prices (NIS)	2014 prices (NIS)	Percent of the average wage
2010	2,207	2,352	26.8
2011	2,266	2,334	26.5
2012	2,414	2,445	27.4
2013	2,439	2,427	27.4
2014	2,414	2,414	26.4

In 2014 the average mobility allowance was NIS 2,137 per month, 23.3% of the average wage – a real increase of 0.8% over 2013 (Table 24). This growth was largely due to the increase in the proportion of the disabled eligible for a car with special equipment.

Table 24
Average Monthly Mobility Allowance (current prices, fixed prices and as a percentage of the average wage), 2010–2014

Year	Current prices (NIS)	2014 prices (NIS)	Percent of the average wage
2010	1,828	1,948	22.2
2011	1,939	1,997	22.7
2012	2,036	2,063	23.1
2013	2,137	2,126	23.1
2014	2,143	2,143	23.4

In December 2014 the average monthly benefit for victims of scalp ringworm was NIS 1,285 – an increase of 3.6% over 2013, and for polio victims it was NIS 3,155 per month – a real increase of 3.3%.