

# How Much are They Different? The Millennials' Generation Attitudes Towards Peers with Disability

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## Abstract

The aim of the research was to describe the differences in attitudes towards people with disabilities among Millennials. A group of 44 respondents has been examined with *The Attitudes Scale towards Disabled* and *Positive and Negative Affect Schedule*. 22 respondents represented people who claimed to have frequent contact with disabled, another half maintained that they do not have such a contact daily. The investigated group consisted of 28 women (64%) and 16 men (36%). The majority were in the age between 20 – 24 years old. The two groups which have been compared and identified on the basis of contact with the disabled people were heterogeneous and very similar demographically. Research results revealed that people who have contact with disabled people present more positive attitudes toward them, in comparison to people who do not have such a contact daily. Moreover, frequent contact with disabled influence the way of perceiving them as more active and alive.

## Introduction

The research has been based on the intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) which outlines that positive effects of intergroup contact occur in contact situations characterized by four key conditions: equal status, intergroup cooperation, common aims and support by social and institutional authorities. In addition, Pettigrew (1998) outlined that these factors appear to be important in reducing prejudice, which is defined as the most common way of assessing intergroup attitudes. This theory has been improved in numerous researches concerning changes in attitudes toward different social groups, also toward people with disabilities (Yuker & Hurley, 1987). In Poland, attitudes towards disabled were also investigated in many researches (Otrębski, Kubik, 2010; Otrębski, Wiącek, Boreczek, 2011, Otrębski, Mariańczyk, Dusza-Przybylińska, 2012; Wiącek, Otrębski, Ozimek, 2016). It also has been proven that education of society about different types of disabilities contributes to positives attitudes towards them (Sękowski, Krempa, 2014). It was interesting to explore if Millennials also present the same tendency in attitudes change, as they generally are perceived as people who are open to change. Also, as the most ethnically diverse generation, they are believed to be tolerant of difference.

## Who are Millennials and why are they special?

Young people born after 1980  
Open to change and tolerant of difference  
Communicate via technology  
Digital Natives & huge fans of digital world  
Willing to make a meaning impact  
Like to share with experiences  
Keen to join communities



## Research question

Is there a significant difference in attitudes towards people with disabilities among the Millennials who have a daily contact with disabled people and those who do not?

## Methods

The research was conducted by on-line questionnaire and involved the measurement with:

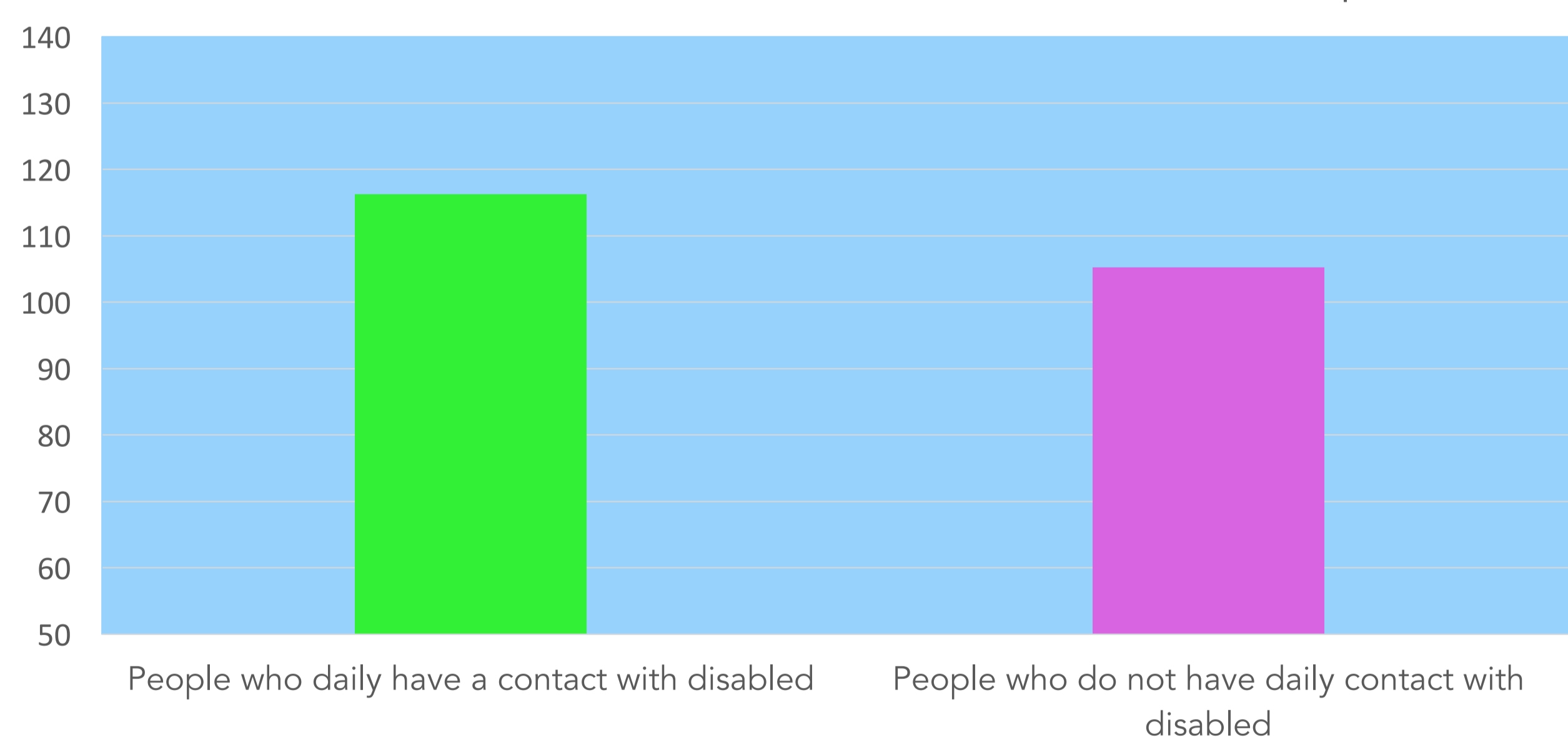
- *The Attitudes Scale toward Disabled People (Skala Postaw wobec Osób Niepełnosprawnych)* (Sękowski, 1991),
- *polish adaptation of The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Skala Uczuć Pozytywnych i Negatywnych)* (Brzozowski, 2010).

## Group of respondents

On the purpose of this report, results of 44 respondents were considered. The investigated group consisted of 28 women (64%) and 16 men (36%). The majority (63%) were in the age between 20 – 24 years old. 75% of respondents claimed to have Bachelor's or Master's degree, the rest are still in the education process. The two groups which have been compared and identified on the basis of contact with the disabled people were heterogeneous and very similar demographically.

Chart 1

The average scores towards disabled of analyzed groups\*



\*p<0,05

The research results revealed that those who daily stay in contact with disabled present more positive attitude towards disabled in comparison to those who do not. The difference among Millennials in both analyzed groups is statistically significant (Chart 1).

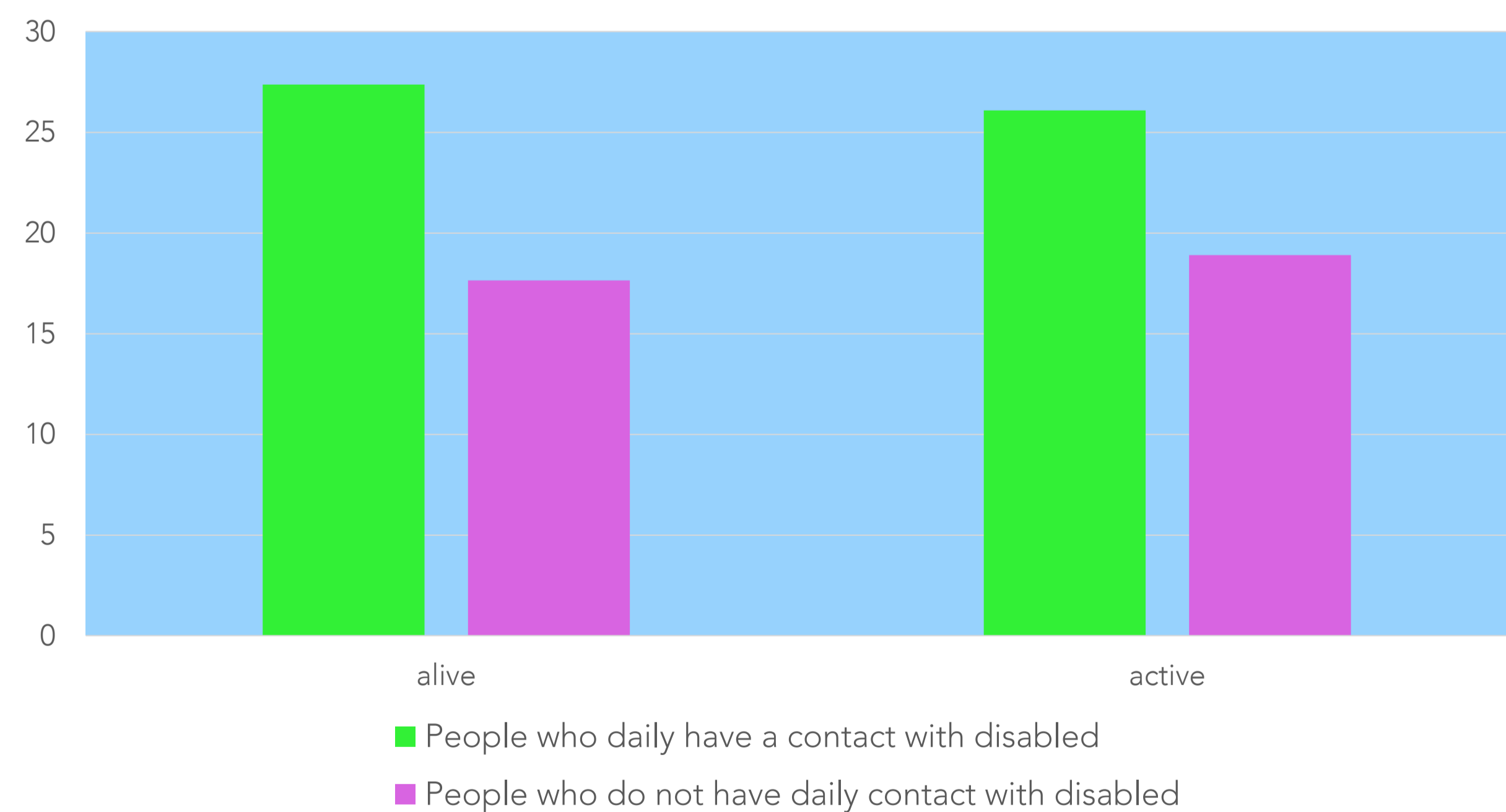
## Conclusions

The results of the concerned research:

- are compatible with previous researches results conducted among other groups of respondents, for example children - Generation Z (Consiglio, Guarnera, Magnano, 2005),
- are an evidence that we can assume that Millennials shape their attitudes in similar way to others and they are no different from other Generations in this area,
- confirm the importance of frequent contact with disabled people, as a way of shaping positive attitudes towards them.

## Results

Chart 2  
Average rank for components: alive\* and active\*\* from Positive and Negative schedule



\*p<0,01, \*\*p<0,05

The research results indicate that Millennials who have frequent contact with disabled are more likely to perceive disabled as active in comparison to these Millennials who do not. Also, these people are keen to perceive disabled as alive in comparison to those who do not (Chart 2).

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