People encountering disabling travel situations: personnal characteristics and mobility features.

The ageing of the population, resulting both from a decline in mortality and in birth rates, could affect the mobility of the whole population. The increase of all forms of disability and functional limitations, in the absence of any other modification of the determinants of transport needs or an adaptation of the supply system, could increase the number of people with difficulties travelling alone and without help outside their homes (Hauet, Ravaud, 2001). Moreover, the upward trend of average distances covered by people who travel, the disappearance of nearby services, the increasing fragmentation of social and family networks may result in more difficulty to meet the needs of mobility. It seems essential to analyze the characteristics of the population expressing their difficulties in transport situations and the impact of those characteristics on their mobility.

This research is based on two national surveys conducted in France. The first survey is Handicap-incapacity-Dependence (HID), conducted by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) in France in 1999 on the consequences of health problems on physical integrity, daily and social life of people living at home (Mormiche, 1998). According to the survey, 39% of the French population residing in households declare at least one impairment.

The second survey is the National Survey on Transportation and Travel (ENTD), conducted in France in 2007-2008 by the ministry for infrastructure, transport and housing and the INSEE. The objective of this survey is to analyze the mobility of households living in France and their use of existing means of transport both collective and individual. National
transport surveys describe all trips whatever the purpose, time, distance, mode of transport or time of day.

Patrick Fougeyrollas and his colleagues in Quebec say that handicap situation corresponds to a reduction in the achievement of lifestyle resulting from the interaction between personal factors (impairment, disability and other personal characteristics) and environmental factors (Fougeyrollas and al. 1996 cited by Ravaud, 1999). Thus, handicap situations being related to an inappropriate environment, these situations can be experienced not only on a long-term basis by people in wheelchairs, blind, dumb or mentally handicapped, but also by children, the elderly, pregnant women, … in other words the whole population at some point (Chanut, Michaudon, 2004). If we want to reduce or eliminate these situations of discomfort, it is first appropriate to first count people with difficulties in their travels. This is possible from the answers expressing discomfort in the survey HID, which show that in France in 1999, 10% of the people say they are hampered in their travel, including nearly 3% who can not move alone.

This communication has a twofold purpose : to analyse all personal characteristics which may lead to a situation of disability when travelling and to observe the impact of this discomfort and these various personal characteristics on the mobility of people. Thus, do all types of disabilities lead to discomfort in travel? Which ones explain more this discomfort? What are the socio-demographic characteristics that influence the inconvenience in travel? How is characterized the mobility of people affected in travel? Age, sex, social class ... do they have an impact on people mobility? … These are all the questions that this study attempts to answer.

Every person might be affected by more than a disability, that’s why this research focuses on studying the consequences of each deficiency on the travel’s discomfort "all things equal elsewhere", before trying to differentiate the level of discomfort in the various disabilities. The study provides then an insight into the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals expressing difficulties. Thus, being older, a woman, a worker or without professional activity are factors that increase the declaration of discomfort. The second part of this study describes the mobility of people with travel disabilities and then analyzes the impact of various personal characteristics on this mobility.
