



International Conference: Evidence in Global Disability and Health

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ABSTRACT

Title: Knowledge , attitude and management of physical and mental changes undergone by young people with disabilities in Pakistan

Abstract text (limited to 300 words, should include background, methods, results and conclusions):

Background

It is a common assumption that People With Disabilities (PWDs) are not sexually active therefore often been denied their Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Rights. They have often been subjected to obligatory sterilizations, forced marriages, involuntary abortions, and likely to experience physical, emotional and sexual abuse, other forms of gender-based violence, and infected with HIV and other STIs^{1,2,3,4,5}.

Method

A mixed method approach was used for understanding the knowledge, attitude and management of physical and mental changes undergone by PWDs on becoming adolescents. Data was collected from 104 PWDs through structured interviews. 6 Focus Group Discussions and 43 In-Depth Interviews were conducted with PWDs, their Parents, Physicians, SRH Experts, and relevant Public and Private institutions.

Results

Growth of hair, increase in height and menstrual bleeding were commonly known bodily changes mentioned by PWDs. Attraction towards opposite sex, worried, confused, shameful, self-conscious, desire to see sexy books/programs, spending time on dressing up, guilt and helplessness were prevalent thinking/feelings experienced along with socio-cultural restrictions on reaching adolescence. Friends/acquaintances, parents and siblings are usually consulted for information and management of these changes.

Conclusion

Mental sensitivities and physical changes experienced by PWDs at the time of natural bodily changes are rooted with limited exposure, socio-cultural limitations, stereotyping and dependence on friends/family members/ siblings.

¹ UNFPA . Emerging issues: sexual and reproductive health of persons with disabilities. New York, UNFPA, 2007

² Groce NE. HIV/AIDS and people with disability. Lancet, 2003, 361:1401–1402.

³ Groce NE (2004). Adolescents and youth with disability: Issues and challenges. Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal; 15 (2): 13-32.

⁴ Wilson A, Monaghan L (2006). HIV/AIDS and the Deaf community. International Journal of Deaf Studies; 22 (1): 1-10.

⁵ World Health Organisation (2009). Promoting sexual and reproductive health for persons with disabilities WHO/UNFPA guidance note.

http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2009/srh_for_disabilities.pdf