



International Conference: Evidence in Global Disability and Health

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ABSTRACT

Title: The Malawi Key Informant Child Disability Project

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

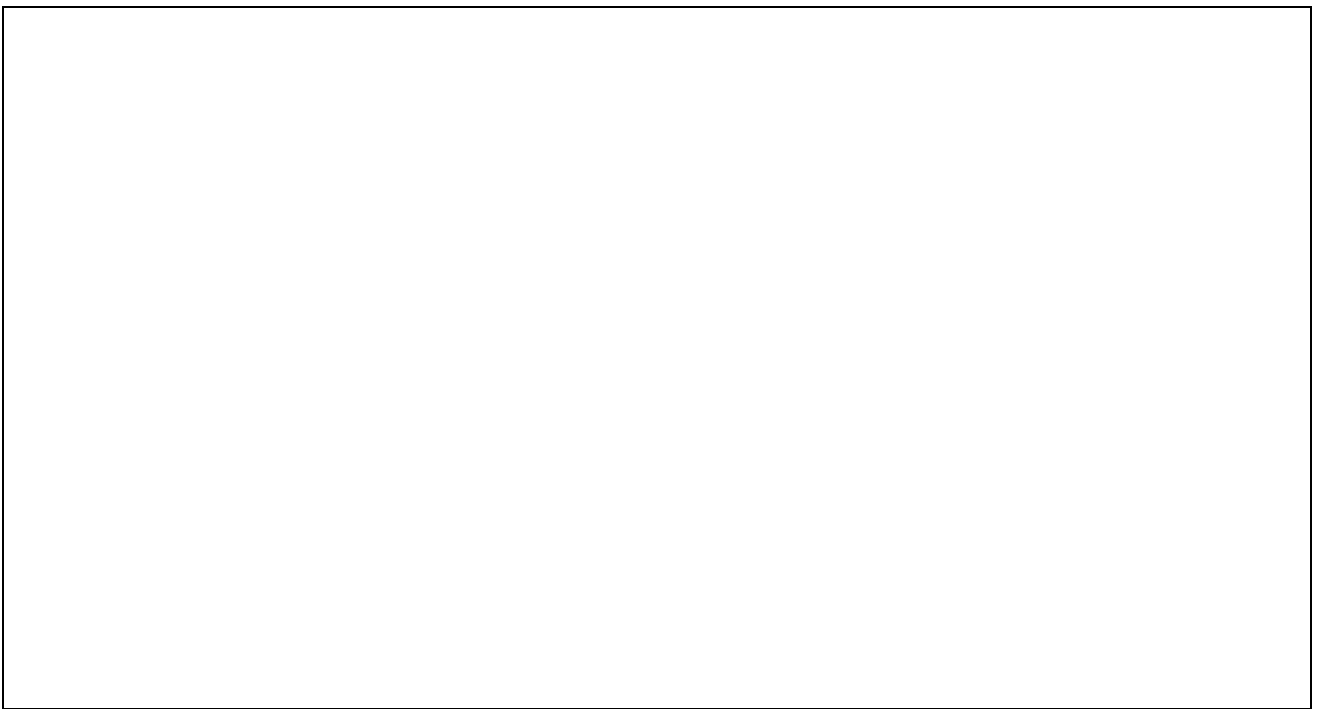
Background: Data on prevalence and causes of childhood disability are lacking in Malawi and generally in Low and Middle Income countries (LMICs) hampering effective service planning and evidence-based advocacy for children with disabilities.

Objective(s): To use the Key Informant Method in Ntcheu and Thyolo districts to a) estimate the prevalence of moderate/severe physical, sensory and intellectual impairments and epilepsy in children and b) estimate rehabilitation and other service needs.

Methods. Five hundred key informants (KIs) from the community were trained in identification of the impairment types included in this study. Identified children were invited to attend a screening camp where they underwent assessment by medical professionals.

Results: Approximately 15,000 children were identified by KIs as potentially having a disability of whom 7220 (48%) attended a screening camp. The estimated prevalence of impairments/epilepsy was 17.3/1000 children. Physical impairment (39%) was the commonest impairment type followed by hearing impairment (27%), intellectual impairment (26%), epilepsy (22%) and vision impairment (4%). Approximately 2100 children per million population could benefit from physiotherapy and occupational therapy and 300 per million are in need of a wheelchair. An estimated 1800 children per million population have hearing impairment caused by conditions that could be treated or prevented through basic primary ear care. Only 50% of children with epilepsy were receiving medication. Corneal opacity was the leading cause of vision impairment. School attendance varied by impairment type and was lowest among children with multiple impairments (38%).

Conclusion: This was the first study to use the KIM to estimate the prevalence of childhood disability in an African country. As well as providing data on child disability and rehabilitation and referral service needs that can be used to inform planning and advocacy of interventions for improving the quality of life of children with disabilities, this method study also has an important capacity building and disability awareness raising component.



Deadline for abstract submission: November 30, 2015

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