



International Conference: Evidence in Global Disability and Health

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ABSTRACT

Title:	Emerging priorities from an early childhood development and training programme in Malawi for families with children who have visual impairment
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Abstract text (limited to 300 words, should include background, methods, results and conclusions):

Early child development and the promotion of programmes to improve are increasingly high up on the agenda of global health organisations and funders as evidence has shown that in some settings, interventions in the first 1000 days of life can lead to huge benefits in school attainment, mental health and psychosocial outcomes at later stages in life. For children with visual impairment, a body of evidence demonstrates how lack of developmental stimulation can lead to poor attainment of milestones in children who might otherwise progress well. Recent studies suggest programs that include ‘training-the-trainers’ approach, equipping families with the knowledge and skills to deliver skills involving the key stakeholders (including the children themselves, families, staff) are essential if services and interventions are to be appropriate, sustainable, needs-based, and ready for potential barriers to implementation.

In this presentation I will highlight some of the challenges and possibilities from a two-year cross-disciplinary study which was funded through Sightsavers Innovation Fund, to create and pilot a training package to improve the developmental outcomes of children with visual impairment in Malawi. We used a mixed methods feasibility study to adapt and pilot the use of these training tools to support early play and communication for children with visual impairment in an African setting. Our recent innovative research has harnessed the WHO/UNICEF training tools for early child development.

I will also critically reflect on the effectiveness of using participatory action research, collaborating with educational and community professionals in the study and examine how we can apply this approach to the complex reality of caring and educating children with disabilities in Malawi. Finally, I will consider how greater links between stakeholders responsible for the delivery of early childhood education with children with disabilities in Malawi in relation to the SDGs.

Deadline for abstract submission: November 30, 2015

Please submit your abstract to: disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk

Restricted to one first author abstract per participant.

If you have any questions, please write to:
[**disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk**](mailto:disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk)