



## International Conference: Evidence in Global Disability and Health

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## ABSTRACT

**Title:** Barriers to accessing water, sanitation and hygiene for disabled people in Malawi.

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

### Background

Disabled people are understood to have inequitable access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). This study in Malawi explores the WASH barriers and priorities of disabled people.

### Methods

36 disabled people and 15 carers from urban and rural regions of Malawi were identified with the aid of key informants to participate in the study. The study employed a range of qualitative methods including in-depth interviews, emotion mapping, priority ranking, photo voice, video observation and WASH demonstrations. A deductive, thematic analysis was conducted with the aid of nVivo 10 and emergent patterns were identified.

### Results

WASH access barriers comprised almost a third of the overall challenges of daily living faced by disabled people and were found to affect all participants. Data analysis enabled the researchers to refine what is meant by *WASH barriers* and in turn delineate these from *WASH needs* and *consequences*. These definitions, taken together, can help inform programming that is appropriate to individual needs and which can mitigate the broader consequences WASH inequity has on an individual's well-being and productivity. The research identified a broad range of WASH access barriers including challenges in bathing, hand hygiene, menstrual hygiene, water storage, and clothes washing – areas that had been deprioritised in existing literature. Disaggregation of these barriers by impairment type and demographic characteristics revealed that, although many barriers were attributable to factors in the external socio-political environment, an individual's body function and personal characteristics also introduce significant challenges or compound barriers.

### Conclusion

Planning for and addressing the needs of people with disabilities within WASH programmes can be better achieved if based on a sound understanding of the needs and priorities of disabled people, the barriers they face and their coping strategies. By refining the variables that affect WASH access, this research enables implementers to identify which barriers are likely to be relevant to a particular disabled individual, within a certain socio-political environment.

**Deadline for abstract submission: November 30, 2015**

Please submit your abstract to: [disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:disabilitycentre@lshtm.ac.uk)

**Restricted to one first author abstract per participant.**

If you have any questions, please write to:

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