

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF DISCRIMINATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH PHYSICAL, DEVELOPMENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN COVID-19 RESPONSE MEASURES

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Relevance: 15% of world population live with some form of disability.

Barriers that disabled people experience everyday include poor access to health care and education, physical obstacles, inequitable laws and social stigma. COVID-19 outbreak marked the serious crisis for the humanity and during the crisis all of the above are magnified, with the mortality risk being higher in disabled individuals.

Objectives:

- to study the factual difficulties which people with disabilities experienced with medical care and social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- to analyze the measures the governments around the world take to maintain disabled individuals' well-being during the pandemic.

Materials and methods: analysis of the recordings of multiple interviews with the persons with disabilities (publicly available); studying the articles, papers and commentaries published by the internationally respected science, health, human rights and sociology related journals and web-sources.

Results: individuals with various kinds of disabilities around the world experience significant hardship in realization of their right to receive the appropriate medical care and special care vital for this group of citizens during the pandemic including the following:

- timely receiving the information, news and recommendations related to COVID-19 via public messages in accessible formats;
- safe and uninterrupted delivery of food, medication and special care in and out of health facilities which the individuals with special needs always rely on;
- difficulties with the education process in the online form especially among disabled youth and people with intellectual and/or communication disfunction;
- not being incorporated in global COVID-19 vaccination campaign as a prioritized category of citizens.

Conclusion: in order to realize the basic human rights of this particular vulnerable group of people (individuals living in conditions significantly lowering their quality of life) governments around the globe must consider taking special action

in re-examining the public health services and COVID-19 response events and making them more inclusive. These changes and innovations will certainly be helpful for the countries' health organizations in case the new infection bursts out sometime in the future.

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