We present a framework for understanding the complex interaction between intellectual disability, health and wellbeing, and assistive technology

Factors related to the use of Assistive Technology by People with Intellectual Disabilities

- **Aspects of Intellectual Disability that may be associated with need for Assistive Technology**
  - Intrinsic to intellectual disability: Impairment in cognitive functioning
  - Impairments associated with intellectual disability: Motor impairments

- **Aspects of Assistive Technology provided by People with Intellectual Disability**
  - Assistive Technology for individuals with intellectual disability: Directly addressing cognitive and adaptive functioning impairments
  - Assistive Technology for individuals with other impairments: Sensory impairments

- **Challenges**
  - Impairments in cognitive and adaptive functioning intrinsic to ID
  - Awareness among caregivers and health and social care professionals

Objective:

The objective of this study is to identify: (1) Facilitators and barriers for people with ID to effectively access assistive products; (2) How effective access and use can be promoted across settings. We call for a greater focus on the needs of people with ID within the GATE initiative.

Methods:

A systematic review on current scientific evidence of factors, including specific cultural, political, social and economic considerations, influencing adequate access to assistive technology for people with ID.

Focus groups

Through focus groups with people with ID and assistive technology specialists, experiences, expertise and best practices in a well-resourced model system setting are gathered. The aim will be to examine potential opportunities and barriers to assistive products availability, use and deployment for people with ID.

Interviews

Face-to-face interviews in different resource settings with people with ID and providers of assistive products.

Authors: Fleur Heleen Booij, John Dinmore, Chapal Khasnabis, Malcolm MacLachlan

--

Global Access to Assistive Technology for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Background:

Only 10% of the people who are in need of assistive products actually have access to them, despite such access being claimed to be a human right. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched a programme to promote Global Cooperation on Assistive Technology (GATE) as an initiative following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The GATE programme’s objective is to improve access to high quality, affordable assistive products for people with varying disabilities, disabilities and age related conditions.

A specific group of people in need of assistive products are people with intellectual disabilities (ID). Although the prevalence of people with ID is around 1% of the total population, it is expected to be a large group of people in need of assistive products. Especially with the increasing life expectancy for this population and the related impact of multimorbidity and frailty. Compared to the general population, people with ID have a higher prevalence of comorbidities which could be better managed with assistive products, such as motor disabilities, sensory impairments and dementia. People with ID often have an atypical presentation of symptoms and depend on their care system to access healthcare and assistive products.

However, barriers that people with ID experience regarding access to assistive products have not yet been sufficiently considered. Worldwide, people with ID are still generally regarded as a devolved and marginalized group of people with generally poor health status is due to health inequities. It is unknown what proportion of people with ID globally actually has access to appropriate assistive products.

Objective:

The objective of this study is to identify: (1) Facilitators and barriers for people with ID to effectively access assistive products; (2) How effective access and use can be promoted across settings. We call for a greater focus on the needs of people with ID within the GATE initiative.

Challenges:

A systematic review on current scientific evidence of factors, including specific cultural, political, social and economic considerations, influencing adequate access to assistive technology for people with ID.

Focus groups

Through focus groups with people with ID and assistive technology specialists, experiences, expertise and best practices in a well-resourced model system setting are gathered. The aim will be to examine potential opportunities and barriers to assistive products availability, use and deployment for people with ID.

Interviews

Face-to-face interviews in different resource settings with people with ID and providers of assistive products.

Participants:

- People with ID
  - Adults
  - Mild to profound ID
  - Users and non-users of assistive products
- Providers of assistive products
- Health professionals
- Suppliers
- Policy makers

Countries: Ireland, South Africa & India.

Research partners: Daughters of Charity, Stellenbosch University & Mobility India.