Use of Washington Group Short Set on Functioning for the screening of disability among adults in a rural community of Bangladesh

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Background

• The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) defines disability as “an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions”.1
• Persons with disability from developing countries face many challenges in aspect of poverty, access to healthcare services, and social stigmas.2
• About 15% of the global population lives with some forms of disability.3
• About 80% of these are from developing countries.3
• Rapid Assessment of Disability (RAD) indicated a prevalence rate of 8.9% in Bangladesh, and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) of Bangladesh (2010) puts the prevalence rate of disability at 9.1%.2
• Lowest prevalence is among children of 0–4 years, and the highest prevalence is among adults of 80 years and above.2
• There is a dire need to design interventions for the management of disabled people for which reason individuals with disability needs to be identified so that they can be linked to the existing health system of Bangladesh
• Amongst several tools and questionnaire, the Washington Group Short Set (WGSS) on Functioning is an easy to use, simple and valid tool for the measurement of disability.4
• The WGSS is set of six questions based on six domains (seeing, hearing, mobility, communication, memory and self-care) that most often limit an individual’s functionality.4
• Many countries use WGSS for national surveys.4

Objective

The aim of this study is to determine the feasibility (in terms of acceptability and ease of administration) of using WGSS as a screening tool to identify persons with disability for further diagnosis and treatment, and consequently determine the prevalence of disability among adults in a rural community of Bangladesh

Methods

Study design: Cross-sectional survey
Study site: Dhangora Union of Raiganj Upazila
Study population: All adults (18 years and above)
Data collection procedure: Data collected at household level using digital software
Study tool: Washington Group Short Set on Functioning

Results

Disability type 1: Person has any form of difficulty in functioning in any (or more) of the domains

Disability type 2: Person has some difficulty in more than one domain or a lot of difficulty and/or cannot do at all in any (or more) of the domains.

Disability type 3: Person has a lot of difficulties or cannot do at all in any (or more) of the domains.

Disability type 4: Person cannot function at all in any (or more) of the domains.

![Disability type 1](image1.png)

![Disability type 2](image2.png)

![Disability type 3](image3.png)

![Disability type 4](image4.png)

Conclusion

This study identified people who self-reported that they had some level of disability in any or more of the domains among all the adult population of a selected rural area of Bangladesh. The study revealed disability as a considerable burden, more so among females. Also, it showed how different types of disability outcomes vary with socio-demographic characteristics such as age and sex. It is expected that the finding will help the policy makers and program managers to recognize the target population for intervention according to the distribution of the four types of disability.

Acknowledgements

Non Communicable Disease Control (NCDC) department of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), and Dr. Farhana Islam

References


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