



FUTURE PHYSICIANS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS DISABLED PEOPLE

PROF. NESRİN CİLİNGİROĞLU, PhD
ASS. PROF. NUKET PAKSOY ERBAYDAR
OZGE KARADAG, MD

Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine
Department of Public Health Ankara TURKEY
Contact address: nesrinc@hacettepe.edu.tr





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DEFINITIONS AND RATIONALE



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- According to the International Classification of Functioning, disability is defined as "the outcome or result of a complex relationship between an individual's health condition and personal factors, and of the external factors that represent the circumstances in which the individual lives“ (*International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), Fifty-Forth World Health Assembly, May 2001*).





- It is estimated that 10% of the world's population experience some form of disability or impairment (*Disability and Rehabilitation. WHO Action Plan 2006-2011, WHO, Geneva*).
- Moreover, the number of people with disabilities is increasing due to population growth, ageing, emergence of chronic diseases and medical advances that preserve and prolong life.





- Currently, there is no regular registration system for the disabled population in Turkey, which bring along a lack of quantitative and qualitative information about this issue for policy development, implementation and evaluation.
- According to the results of the National Disability Survey (2002), the proportion of disability including disabling chronic illnesses was found to be 12.3% (*Turkish Statistical Institute. 2002 Turkey Disability Survey. TURKSTAT, Ankara, 2002*).





- According to the Social Model of Disability (1976), disability is not caused by an individual's particular 'impairment', but by the way society fails to meet their needs. This view suggests disabled persons' individual and collective disadvantage is due to a complex form of institutional discrimination.
- As evidenced by the passage of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN), more attention is being focused on interventions designed to be more inclusive and have an impact on disabled persons' lives (*Mont D., Loeb M. Beyond DALYs: Developing indicators to assess the impact of public health interventions on the lives of people with disabilities. SP Discussion Paper No. 0815, The World Bank, May 2008*).



- Attitudes to disabled people can be defined as learned, emotionally toned predispositions that represent values and beliefs, with components of these attitudes being knowledge, feelings and actions (*Brillhart BA, Jay H, Wyers ME. Attitudes toward people with disabilities. Rehab Nursing 1990;15:80-5*).



- Although attitudes of every community member are important, attitudes of medical students towards disabled people should have a special significance, since it can be considered as one of the major determinants of the quality of the health services for disabled persons.





OBJECTIVE

- This study aimed to analyze the attitudes of first year medical students' towards disabled people, and to assess the associations (if any) between socio demographic characteristics and their attitudes.





METHODOLOGY



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➤ Study Area : Hacettepe University

- State University (1967)
- Over 150 undergraduate and 173 postgraduate programmes
- 30000 students (800 international)
- 4000 academic staff



➤ The study is conducted at the Faculty of Medicine



- Faculty has 3 hospitals
 - Adult hospital
 - Pediatric hospital
 - Oncology hospital
- 850 beds for adults
- 288 beds for children
- 114 out-patient clinics
- The hospital is reputed as being a reference centre for Ankara as well as Turkey.





➤ Study Group:

- The study population included first year medical students at Hacettepe University, Faculty of Medicine.
- Participation was on a voluntary basis.
- 288 out of 364 (79.1%) first year medical students have participated the study.



➤ Data Collection:



■ This descriptive study's data were collected in December, 2008 through "Attitude Towards Disabled Persons Scale" (ATDPS) (*Dokmen Z.Y. Development, Validity and Reliability Study of Attitude Towards Disabled Persons Scale. Presented at the XI. National Psychology Congress, September 2000, Izmir, Turkey*) in addition to a standard questionnaire including questions on sociodemographics, disability (if, any) of the person or his/her acquaintances, previous contact with disabled persons and opinions on faculty environment on disability related issues.



Measurement: Attitude Towards Disabled Persons Scale (ATDPS)



- The attitude scale, developed by Dokmen (2000), was found to be both valid and reliable to use in the Turkish population.
- The instrument consists of 30 Likert scale type statements.
- Scores of the five-item Likert scale are appointed as “1: Strongly agree”, “2: Agree”, “3: Neither agree or disagree”, “4: Disagree” and “5: Strongly disagree”.



ATDPS



- The total score of the scale is calculated by summing up the scores of 30 statements; however statements numbered 2, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 25 are scored vice versa since these statements represent positive attitudes.
- Minimum and maximum total scores of the attitude scale are 30 and 150, respectively.





➤ Data Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics were used to summarize data; whereas χ^2 , t-test and ANOVA were used to compare groups by SPSS 15.0 statistical package program.
- For statistical significance, alpha value was taken as 0.05.



RESULTS



Of the 288 students surveyed:

- 50.3% were male
- Mean age was $18,5 \pm 0,8$ years
- 71.9% had a family size of 4-5 people
- 44.5% perceived their family income level as good and 47.6% as average.
- 36,8% of thier mothers and 69.0% of their fathers are university graduates.





- 0.3% had some kind of disability
- 1.7% had at least one disabled close family member
- 20.5% had at least one disabled relative
- 15.3% had at least one disabled friend
- Of them,
 - 34.7% declared that physical environment
 - 41.6% declared that educational environment
 - 53.1% declared that cafeterias, sports center and dormitoryof the university is not proper for disableds.





Most commonly expressed feelings towards disabled were:

- Pity (51.0%)
- Anxiety/ worry (21.2%)
- Curiosity (20.1%)





- 79.2% expressed that positive discrimination should be applied to disabled persons.
- 84.4% stated that s/he would like to take specific courses on how to approach disabled patients as future medical doctors.
- 30.2% stated that frequent contact with disabled patients would be an important determinant in their future career planning.





- Mean “ATDPS” score was 114.5 ± 12.9 out of 150.
- According to the mean scores:
 - Female students attitudes' ($p=0.014$),
 - Students who are disabled or have a disabled family member ($p=0.045$),
 - Students who had taken care of a disabled person ($p=0.010$),
 - Students who feel comfortable in their relation with disabled persons ($p=0.006$), and
 - Students who would like to receive further medical education on disability ($p=0.015$)

were found to have more favorable attitudes than their counterparts.



LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY



- Descriptive study although response rate was 80%.
- Besides, it was not possible to follow up the students throughout their education in order to assess the effect of medical education on their perceptions, attitudes and behaviors towards disabled people and disability since the questionnaires were filled up anonymously due to ethical issues.



CONCLUSION



- This study provided knowledge for constructing medical curriculum for generation of safe communities for disabled people and towards disability.
- Study provided clues for interventions aiming to increase medical students' awareness on and interaction with disabled people may help to establish positive attitudes for future physicians and consequently improving the health care services for disabled.



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Thank you ...



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