

Decolonizing Public Health Teach-In

DISABILITY Casey Thacker

Abstract

Disability is a broad characterization of comorbidity, limitations to daily activities, and disrupted quality of life. Nearly 1 billion people in the world suffer from disability, with approximately 2-3% suffering from serious, debilitating functional impairment. There are substantial physical and psychosocial consequences, including impaired function and activity participation, mental health disorders, and soaring medical care costs. Critical issues in disability today concern the national opioid abuse crisis, promotion of successful aging given a rapidly growing older adult population, and research into Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia. Several groups are especially vulnerable to disability, particularly those with chronic diseases. Increasingly, people are able to manage chronic diseases to older ages, though this substantially increases health care spending. The WHO recently devised an action plan to address global disability needs, though there is substantial room to improve complementary and alternative medical approaches to mental health promotion and technological dissemination of resources.

Readings

Alber, S. M. & Freedman, V. A. Public Health and Aging. Chapter 5: Disability and Function. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
World Health Organization. Disability Infographic. World Report on Disability.
World Health Organization. Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021.