Reviewer's report

Title: Access to Health care and Employment Status of People with disabilities in South India, the SIDE Study (South India Disability Evidence) Study: A Case Control Study

Version: 3 Date: 21 July 2014

Reviewer: Sanjeev Gupta

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Major compulsory revisions:

1. This is not a case control study. The ‘control’ group in this study is a comparison group. In fact, the terms ‘cases’ and ‘controls’ have hardly been used in the Results Section and Tables. The reason for selecting 1153 persons without disability for 839 persons with disability (ratio 1:38:1) needs to be described.

2. The matching of the ‘controls’ has been done by Age and Sex. However, the education and economic status of the participant can also influence his/her employment status. Just by being in the neighborhood cannot ensure similar education and economic status.

3. Who was the informant in the family, in case the participant had severe hearing impairment or intellectual impairment, or was otherwise unable to understand or answer the questions? In such cases, some of the questions pertaining to barriers would have been answered by the informant? This needs to be discussed.

4. Further, the number in whom the informant had to answer, and the reason thereof, needs to be indicated.

5. The sample size estimation needs to be described.

6. The initial identification of participants with disability was carried out by Key Informants (KI) after their one day training. In this one day, they were trained to identify all the Impairments included in the study. The quality assurance measures taken in their training, and subsequent identification of persons with disability need to be described.

7. Further, in this regard, were some of the persons with no disability cross-checked by the Field Investigators?

8. As mentioned, it was possible to include only those impairments which were visible to the external eye or could be picked through a short history. With this methodology, the authors need to describe how the following were picked up:
   • Visual impairment: bilateral severe visual impairment or blindness;
   • Hearing impairment: bilateral severe/profound hearing impairment;
• Intellectual impairment.

9. Were there no refusals or absenteeism in the study?

10. All field investigators and Key Informants were people with disabilities. These were recruited from the study area. Hence, it is likely that they were participants of the study as well. In such a case, could this have introduced a measurement bias? This needs to be discussed.

11. The authors have described the numbers of participants with physical impairment, severe hearing impairment, severe visual impairment/blindness and intellectual impairment. Was there no participant with multiple impairments?

12. Some of the limitations of the study need to be highlighted.

13. Table 1: In the Age Category – the class intervals of the four classes are different. The reason why this is so, needs to be explained.

14. Table 2: The total numbers (denominator) need to be indicated for each row. There appear to be inconsistencies in the percentages.

15. Table 3: The section-heading in the text related to this table needs to be corrected.

16. Table 4: The Odds Ratio has been adjusted for Age only. Adjustments need to be made for all variables of this table, age and sex. Those suffering from diabetes or depression, or with a history of hospitalization, are more likely to be currently on medication. The purpose of chi-square in this table is not clear.

17. Table 5: The title of this table is a repetition of Table 7. This table 5 can be deleted. The information can be included in the text.

18. Table 7: This table can be deleted. The information can be included in the text.