Reviewer's report

Title: Assistive technology use and human rights enjoyment: A cross-sectional study in Bangladesh

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Reviewer: Bolajoko O. Olusanya

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a complementary paper to a related work that examined the impact of user involvement in service provision for hearing aids and wheelchairs in the same study population submitted to BMC-HSR by the authors. In this current paper the authors set out to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between use of assistive technology and enjoyment of human rights. As stated by authors, the rationale for this study is that there is currently no empirical data to support the explicit recognition in the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities of the use of assistive technology as fundamental human rights. This is against the backdrop of earlier attempts to quantitatively evaluate the relationship between health and human rights in other life situations by other researchers. Moreover, it has been argued that measurement of the perceived human rights status of populations and population groups may contribute to health policies sensitive to human rights.

Users of hearing aids and wheelchairs were specifically selected in order to achieve a large enough number of respondents for analysis. The approach adopted was to quantify “enjoyment of human rights” rather than a more comprehensible evaluation of infringements of human rights attributable to lack of provision/use of assistive technology. Several limitations of this study have been highlighted by the authors and should be taken into consideration in assessing the overall utility of this study.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The questionnaire used for eliciting the principal outcome measures of human rights should be provided as a supplementary data to assist readers gain a better appreciation of this study.

2. The timing and methodology for administering the questionnaire vis-à-vis the IOI-HA in the companion study should be clarified.

3. How can the results of this study be related to the more obvious issues of discrimination and stigma in the use of assistive technology in traditional communities in developing countries?

4. The similarities and differences among users of hearing aids and wheelchairs
in relation to human rights infringements or enjoyment should be clarified.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Title: insert “rural” before Bangladesh.
2. Abstract: Results – “Users of wheelchairs ….. significantly higher……… significantly lower …..” The comparison group(s) should be clearly stated.
3. Methods: Why was thumb printing not considered as an alternative to written consent in this population?
4. Results: The abbreviations in the tables should be defined as footnotes.
5. All abbreviations used in the manuscript should be defined under a separate section before references.
6. References: #14 should be revised appropriately with access date stated.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.