

Barriers to Inclusion of Children Living with Disability in Sports and Physical Activities in Nigeria

Margaret Bukola Fatudimu

School of Global Public Health, New York University

Francis Leader

School of Global Public Health, New York University

Abstract:

Background and Objective(s): Children living with disabilities often face challenges in participating in sports and physical activities in schools, which can negatively impact their health and well-being. This is because schools have been considered as one of the most important and suitable primary social institutions for promoting physical activity in children. This study aimed to investigate the factors that affect the inclusion of children with disabilities in participating in sports and physical activities in primary schools in Nigeria.

Materials / Methods: This cross sectional study involved 24 public primary school teachers and 50 private primary school teachers. The Teachers Attitude Towards Inclusion of Student with Disability in Physical Activity Questionnaire and Sports for Learners with Disability in Schools Questionnaire were used to collect data on attitudes of primary school teachers to inclusion of children living with disability in sports and physical activities. Other factors affecting to inclusion in physical activity and sports were also investigated. Descriptive statistics of percentages, frequencies, mean, standard deviation were used to summarize data obtained from the study and analyzed using Chi-square test at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results: The mean age of all participants (52 females and 22 males) was 41.51 ± 1.175 years. Over half of the participants (52.7%) had a negative attitude towards inclusion of children with disability in sports. There was no significant association ($p > 0.05$) between each of the participants' age, sex, years of teaching experience and academic qualification and attitude towards inclusion of children with disability in sports and physical activity. The major factors identified as barriers to inclusion were lack of opportunity for children with disability to participate in sports, unavailability of special aids or adapted sports equipment, poor fitness, fear of mockery and rejection, unwillingness of parents to allow their children to participate in sports, lack and trained therapists, inaccessibility of school buildings and playgrounds, lack of schools policy on assistance with disability to participate in sports.

Conclusions / Significance: It was concluded that a number of factors served as barriers to inclusion of children with disabilities in sports and physical activity, and primary school teachers in Nigeria have negative attitude towards inclusion of children with disability in sports and physical activities.