

New study reveals prejudices amongst disabled

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[ 摘要 ] 13/03/2007. Disabled people hold just the same prejudices towards other disabled people as those who do not have a disability, new health research from The City University, London reveals.

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Disabled people hold just the same prejudices towards other disabled people as those who do not have a disability, new health research from The City University, London reveals.

The research, entitled Disabled People's Attitudes toward Other Impairment Groups: a hierarchy of impairments, was completed from anonymous questionnaires designed to investigate attitudes of disabled people towards other impairment groups and compare the attitudes of non-disabled people towards these same groups. Each participant within the sample, comprising 217 disabled people and 114 non-

disabled people, was asked to score a series of statements reflecting aspects of individuals' rights between one and six, based on how strongly they agreed with it.

The five statements covered the right to live in the community, to participate in vocational training and thus improve employability, to interact with others in a social setting and being treated fairly, to being treated as an adult citizen with rights and responsibilities, to the fundamental right of parenting and therefore reproduction.

The findings show that people with disabilities do not always wish to be associated with people from other impairment groups for a variety of complex reasons, including competing for scarce allocation of funding/resources, sexual attraction and stigma.

Carried out by Mark Deak, a PhD student at City's St. Bartholomew School of Nursing and Midwifery, and himself disabled, the research points to a hierarchy of impairment, ranking Deaf as the most 'desirable' impairment followed by Arthritis, Epilepsy, Cerebral Palsy, HIV/AIDS, Down's syndrome and Schizophrenia amongst disabled people.

These prejudices are almost identical to those held by the non-

disabled sample, with the only difference being that Cerebral Palsy and HIV/AIDS were placed in reverse order.

This research is supported by findings published in the 23rd Report of the British Social Attitudes survey, whereby 82 per cent of people who don't know any disabled people say that they would not feel very comfortable with a wheelchair moving in next door, compared with 71 per cent of people who know someone who is disabled and 62 per cent of pe

"A hierarchy of the most accepted form of disability is often used by many disabled people, causing sub-

grouping, social oppression and isolation for those groups considered least 'desirable'. This exposes a need for society to recognise that disabled people are not one homogeneous group and that for a true sense of equal opportunities to exist, policies should focus on how to improve attitudes amongst disabled and non-

-disabled people alike," says Mark Deak.

"To achieve the Government's vision of a society whereby disabled people will be respected and included as equal members of society, it is vital disabled people are at the vanguard of challenging attitudes.

Chief executive of Disability Matters, Dr Stephen Duckworth OBE, has had personal experience of this hierarchy: "I broke my neck when I was 21 and shied away from any involvement with other spinal cord injured people; let alone people who had, in my opinion at the time, 'less socially acceptable impairments'. I now look back and see how wrong I was."

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