

1907

## **The impact of conceptualisations of disability on development of new Occupational Therapy curriculum in Malawi**

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Malawi is a small landlocked country in Southern Africa. Malawi is in the process of developing Bachelors and Diploma level Occupational Therapy education programs, with 10 therapists currently offering OT services in the country. Researchers used literature review as well as surveys and interviews with services that have current exposure to OT to identify patterns in the conceptualization of disability in service providers.

Research suggests that disability in Malawi is largely understood by the community in mythological or religious terms or from a biomedical model and commonly understood by health professionals from a medical model. There are few services and initiatives delivering community based support that promote participation of people with disability, using a bio-psycho social model that promotes inclusion and participation of people with disabilities. The training of new OT's can help develop existing and new services including community based OT within CBR programmes to meet this need in Malawi. Curriculum development guidelines emphasize the necessity of contextualizing content and teaching.

This presentation will explore how this awareness of conceptualizations of disability can inform the curriculum development for new OTs to be influential in promoting the rights, participation and equality for people with disabilities in Malawi.