

Impact of Culture and Religion on Disability and the Health Care Seeking Practices of the Shona People

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Abstract : The paper seeks to find out and document the impact of culture and religion on disability, specifically language impairment and health care seeking practices of the Shona people. Its main objectives are to explore the cultural and religious beliefs that affect the utilization of rehabilitation services in a rural community in Zimbabwe. The other objective of the paper is to describe how language impairment is presented and understood by people living in a Zimbabwean rural area. The research is qualitative interpretive phenomenological research, and it utilizes the case study approach using semi structured interviews and focus group discussions. Results from the research established that religious and cultural beliefs determine how the Shona people view disability, and this guides their health care seeking practices. The research is important since communication disorders occur in populations worldwide though they are not always recognized as such. The lack of recognition of and the attitudes toward speech and languages disorders, as well as the beliefs about the causes of such disorders, affect people's attitudes toward the treatment of the disorders.

Keywords : culture, religion, disability, language impairment

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