

Ethical Considerations for Conducting Research on Violence against Women with Disabilities: Discussing Issues of Reasonable Accommodation, Capacity and Equal Participation

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Abstract : Background: Women with disabilities are largely missing from global research on violence prevention, yet research shows that women with disabilities are a particularly marginalised group who experience heightened levels and unique forms of violence than men with disabilities, and women without disabilities. They face heightened stigma, discrimination, and violence due to their gender and their disability. Including women with disabilities in violence, research helps inform policy and prevention interventions that are relevant and inclusive. To ensure their inclusion in violence research, we need ethical guidelines that are sensitive to their heightened risk and vulnerability, that recognize the diversity in the disabled population, but that also promote disabled people's agency in defining their own violence prevention needs and agendas. Objective: To highlight pertinent ethical issues around women with disabilities' inclusion and participation in violence research. Methodology: Considering the lack of formalized guidelines for research of people with disabilities, we draw from the literature on international ethics guidelines for researching violence against women, and the Emancipatory Disability Research paradigm, as well as drawing from our own experiences from the field in applying the guidelines when doing research with disabled women. Findings: Following the guiding ethical principles of respect, benefit, justice, and do no harm, we argue that reasonable accommodation, capacity, and equal participation need to be considered in conceptualizing and conducting ethical violence research with women with disabilities. We conclude that disability research in the area of violence is highly politicized and must be carefully scrutinized to ensure justice and the contribution of women with disabilities to their own welfare. Implications: We suggest that these issues are practically applied in the field and tested and critiqued to enhance best practice for undertaking ethical research with this particular group. It is important that not only researchers and ethics committees, but also disabled women and disabled organizations, are involved in enhancing and formalizing ethical research guidelines for marginalized populations.

Keywords : capacity, emancipatory disability research paradigm equal participation, reasonable accommodation, research ethics, violence against women with disabilities

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