

Social Workers' Perspectives on Muslim Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

Authors : Ayelet Gur

Abstract : Background: Parents with intellectual disability are of great interest to social service professionals. Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities aims to ensure that persons with disabilities can create a family by providing adequate supports. The aim of the current investigation was to portray families with parents with intellectual disabilities within Muslim- Arab society in Israel. Method: Qualitative method using semi-structured interviews with nine-teen Muslim Israeli social workers was employed. Thematic analysis was used to identify major themes. Results: Families with parents with intellectual disability are not a rare phenomenon in the Arab society. The common type is of marriage between a man with intellectual disability and a woman without disability. Findings indicated two main motives for the arranged marriage of a man with intellectual disability: the extended family's concerns about his future and their desire for the family continuity. The non-disabled wives' motives for marrying men with intellectual disabilities revolved around their lack of other opportunities to create a family and their desire to leave their parents' household and live independently. Those women were described as partly or fully aware of their husbands' disability prior to the marriage. The family life of those families were described in relation to the fathers' involvement in family life and relation to the wives' high burden and in many cases, acceptance of their life situation. Conclusions: Findings are discussed with respect to religious values on disability, arranged marriage and the status of Muslim women. Services and supports for parents with intellectual disabilities should be developed with respect to the cultural values and norms.

Keywords : Arab society in Israel, intellectual and developmental disability, parents with intellectual disability, social work

Conference Title : ICDS 2018 : International Conference on Disability Studies

Conference Location : Vancouver, Canada

Conference Dates : August 09-10, 2018