

# Global Competency Standards for Health Professionals on Disability-Inclusion

Lea Gölz<sup>1</sup>, Julis Rosenhan<sup>2</sup>, Kaloyan Kamenov<sup>2</sup>, Birgit Proding<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Augsburg

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization

**Background:** The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities [1] demonstrates that persons with disabilities experience health inequities due to health system barriers amongst other factors. Building capacity in health professionals (HPs) to follow a human rights-based approach when addressing needs of people with disabilities is one strategic entry point to disability inclusion in health systems. However, HPs often lack knowledge to adequately capture or contextualize the needs of people with disabilities or adopt a stigmatizing attitude which contributes to rather than reduces health inequities [1-4].

**Objective:** This project aims to develop Global Competency Standards to support a competency-based outcomes approach to education and training of health professionals on disability inclusion.

**Methods:** An international multi-stage study, which includes a preparatory phase and a consensus process, is conducted. The preparatory phase of developing the Global Competency Standards contains three parts: first, a scoping review of academic and grey literature on competencies on disability-inclusion of health workers is performed. Second, key informant interviews with experts, who have published substantially on the topic are conducted. Third, a technical expert working group has been established who discuss and collect relevant themes on the topic. Based on these preparatory studies, a first draft of the Competency Standards is developed and presented to people with disabilities to gain their feedback. The results of their feedback are used for refining the standards. Then, the revised draft of the Global Competency Standards on Disability Inclusion becomes subject to an international consensus process, including a consensus survey and workshop with the technical expert working group.

The technical working group consists of people from all WHO world regions representing organizations for persons with disabilities, larger civil society, academia and health professionals working in the field of disability.

**Results:** This study is ongoing; the preparatory studies have been completed, feedback from people with disabilities is sought, and subsequently the consensus process will be initiated and is expected to be completed in summer 2025. This presentation will emphasize a human-rights based training approach to strengthen disability inclusion in health care.

**Implication for research and/or (healthcare) practice:** Having Global Competency Standards for health professionals on disability inclusion available will facilitate implementing actions and recommendations informed by the WHO Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities.

## References (optional):

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2. Whiteley AD, Kurtz DL, Cash PA. Stigma and Developmental Disabilities in Nursing Practice and Education. *Issues Ment Health Nurs*. 2016;37(1):26-33.
3. Almhdawi KA. Influencing Medical Students' Knowledge and Attitudes Related to Disability: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Am J Phys Med Rehabil*. 2022;101(2):113-8.
4. Bowen CN, Havercamp SM, Karpiak Bowen S, Nye G. A call to action: Preparing a disability-competent health care workforce. *Disabil Health J*. 2020;13(4):100941.