

WHAT SERVICES DO WHEELCHAIR USERS VALUE? FINDINGS FROM A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN KENYA AND THE PHILIPPINES

Emma Williams¹, Eva Bazant¹, Elizabeth Hurwitz¹, Lee Kirby², Adovich Rivera³,
Immaculate Obaga¹, Brenda Onguti¹, Tyrone Sy³, Deepti Tanuku¹, Jamie Noon⁴

1. Jhpiego, Baltimore, US, and Nairobi, Kenya, 2. Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia, Canada,
3. Insitute of Health Policy and Development Studies, University of Philippines, Manila,
Philippines, 4. Independent Consultant

ABSTRACT

A total of 48 adult basic wheelchair users residing in Nairobi, Kenya, or Manila, Philippines, participated in in-depth interviews about their experiences receiving wheelchair services. Interview transcripts were coded using Atlas-ti for predetermined and emergent themes, using a phenomenological analysis approach. Results are presented by service step. Wheelchair users frequently described past experiences with ill-fitting wheelchairs and little formal training to use wheelchairs effectively. Through exposure to multiple wheelchairs and self-advocacy, they learned to select wheelchairs that were more suitable for their needs. Maintenance and repair services often in short supply, and this was thought to shorten the wheelchairs' duration of use. Peer support networks emerged as an important source of knowledge, resources and emotional support. These findings can be used to refine wheelchair services in these and similar settings.