

ABSTRACT

Background: Children with cerebral palsy (CP) have quite a lot of challenges (transportation, discrimination, financial constraints) in accessing health care than those without disabilities. Providing healthcare support services for persons with disabilities (Cerebral Palsy) has been captured in international instruments like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006) and the Persons with Disability Act (Act 715) of Ghana.

Methods: This study used a qualitative cross-sectional design employing phenomenology to identify factors that influence access to healthcare services for children with cerebral palsy in the Greater Accra Region (GAR) of Ghana. A total of fifteen (15) participants including parents of children with cerebral palsy and health care providers to children with cerebral palsy in the Greater Accra Region (GAR) were recruited in this study. Ten in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted among parents of children with cerebral palsy and 5 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted among healthcare providers during the study. The data collected were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed to generate themes with the aid of Nvivo version 12.0.

Results: The majority of the respondents have knowledge of the National Health Policy in Ghana, some of them believed the implementation of the National Health Policy is ineffective. The majority of the respondents were discriminated against and stigmatized both in public transport and hospitals. The study revealed that income, distance to a health facility, knowledge of disability, transportation cost, and satisfaction are some of the individual factors that influence access to healthcare services for children with cerebral palsy (CP). The study also showed that healthcare factors such as availability of specialized services, the attitude of health professionals,

the physical environment of hospitals, and the availability of rehabilitation specialists influence parent's access to healthcare services for their children with cerebral palsy.

Conclusion: Findings from the study revealed the challenges related to access to healthcare services for children with cerebral palsy. Improving access to healthcare services would involve a multi-sectoral approach and a cautious effort on the part of the government, private hospital owners, and all relevant stakeholders involved in the care of children with cerebral palsy.