

# 33.

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of recent disability-related research on St Kitts and Nevis.

**Design and Methods:** For this study, the results, conclusions and recommendations of five disability-related studies have been analysed. The five studies were conducted by students of the University of Applied Sciences Leiden or The VU University Amsterdam between 2011 and 2017. One study was quantitative, three were qualitative, and another had mixed-method design. The data of these studies were coded by theme and arranged according to three topics: scope of disability and disease, services and support, and needs and challenges.

**Results:** For 'scope of disability and disease', attention is given to the relation between ageing, chronic diseases and disability. Health education, especially on healthy lifestyles, may help to prevent the increase in chronic diseases and disability. On 'services and support' it is found that both the formal and the informal care is not sufficient to meet the needs of people with disabilities and the elderly. Training and retraining of key players, a community-based approach, and a rehabilitation centre are key recommendations. Finally, 'needs and challenges' are mainly in the areas of financial assistance, mobility, employment and education, and information provision.

**Conclusions:** The rehabilitation needs of the people of Nevis are currently unfulfilled and likely to increase. St Kitts and Nevis need to prepare themselves for a future with a larger proportion of elderly people, with more people who are chronically ill and/or have a disability.

# Six years of disability-related research on St Kitts and Nevis:

## A thematic synthesis of five studies between 2011 and 2017

MT Cornielje, H Cornielje, G Liburd  
Enablement & Eureka Health Services



THOMSON  
2012

**What are the needs of disabled people in Nevis and how can they be best addressed?**

Most disabilities on Nevis are caused by chronic health conditions, and people with disabilities experience difficulties in walking, climbing stairs and self-care. The transport system, accessibility of building structures, social attitudes, certain policies, and availability of services need to be improved. Community Based Rehabilitation could solve the lack of human resources.

2014  
FLEMING  
& VISSER



**What are the needs and difficulties regarding activity and participation of people with a disability due to stroke at home or current place of living in Nevis?**

The most common difficulties relate to strength in the upper and lower limb, climbing stairs, doing their hobby, coping, and employment. The most common barriers are lack of information and knowledge, lack of financial support, lack of home adaptations, accessibility of public places. The most common needs are rails, ramps, bars, and information.

2015  
SPIEGELS &  
VAN DER SPIJK



**What is the HRQoL of the elderly population of 65 years and above on Nevis?**

Of the participants, 28,3% (n=43) was classified as disabled and 88,2% (n=134) have a chronic condition. The mean HRQoL score was 71,37 (SD=8,06). Having a disability has a significant negative effect on HRQoL. HRQoL shows no relation with socio-demographic characteristics nor with having a chronic condition. Ageing, diabetes and hypertension were associated with a higher prevalence of disability.

## RESULTS



2016  
OUDSHOORN

**To what extent do formal and informal home-based care services provide for the need of the elderly on Nevis?**

The main needs of the elderly are loneliness, poor health, need for personal-care services, regular health check-ups, low financial status and lack of family support. Formal care exists of special elderly programmes of the Social Services, domestic-aid and personal-care and nursing services provided by Social Workers and/or Community Health Workers.

VAN POLEN  
& BERK



2017

**What are the main challenges of parents/caregivers in the upbringing of a child (0-18) with a disability on SKN and which strategies could help them to overcome these challenges?**

Parents/caregivers face challenges in the day-to-day care of their child with a disability. They also face challenges in receiving help from (care)services, in family support, in the school their child goes to, in the community and in regards to financial assistance from the government.

## CONCLUSIONS

### I - SCOPE OF DISABILITY AND DISEASE

Ageing, chronic conditions and lifestyle diseases are major causes of disability on SKN. Especially obesity is a risk factor and its prevention requires urgent action.

### II – SERVICES & SUPPORT

- Stigma and social isolation are major issues for people with mental health issues. They are in need of a mental health institution.
- Elderly receive increasingly less care from family members and rely more on their informal network and formal care services.
- There is a need to expand home-based care services to provide more specialist and complex services.
- There is also need for a rehabilitation centre as well as a community-based approach to save costs – in combination with more extensive training.

### III – NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

- The financial side of home-based care and social security should be better studied to improve people's financial status.
- Attention should be given to improve physical accessibility, accessibility to education and jobs, and to information in general and specifically for services and support.

**The Government of SKN and the wider community need to prepare themselves for a future with a larger proportion of elderly people, with an increased number of people who are chronically ill and/or have a disability.**