
PREVALENCE AND IMPACTS OF DISABILITY ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICE DELIVERY, MANAGEMENT AND UTILISATION IN VANUATU

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INTRODUCTION

- Vanuatu Health Sector Strategy 2021-2030 commits to strengthened Primary Health Care
- *Ensure all people of Vanuatu who need health services receive them, including women, youth, the elderly and vulnerable groups ... such as people with disabilities*
- Globally, people with disabilities are often excluded from societal participation, and generally have poor access to health and rehabilitative care.



INTRODUCTION

- In 2018, a national Village Health Worker Program (VHWP) Evaluation Survey sought to better understand the impact of disability at the community-care level.
- **Research Aim:**
- To determine the prevalence and impact of disability amongst community-level health service providers, managers and users, to inform primary health care system planning and resourcing in Vanuatu.
- **Research Questions:**
- To what extent can people with disabilities access health and rehabilitative services at the community-care level in of Vanuatu?
- How does disability impact on health service users, managers and providers?



METHODS: sampling and operations

- VHWP Evaluation Survey conducted Oct-Dec 2018; all provinces.
- 4 Survey Teams: 2 Surveyors; 1 Zone or Area Nurse; 1 VHWP officer.
- Statistically representative, random sample of 67% Aid Posts.
- > 1500 respondents (VHWs, APCs, Supervisors, Chiefs, community).
- Digital survey instruments (KoBo Collect) developed, translated and pre-tested.



Respondents: Confidence Level 95%		Error Margin
Aid Posts	124	5.2
VHWs	114	5.8
Zone / Area Nurse	108	6.2
Chief	118	5.6
APC Representative	114	5.8
Community	1,392	2.6

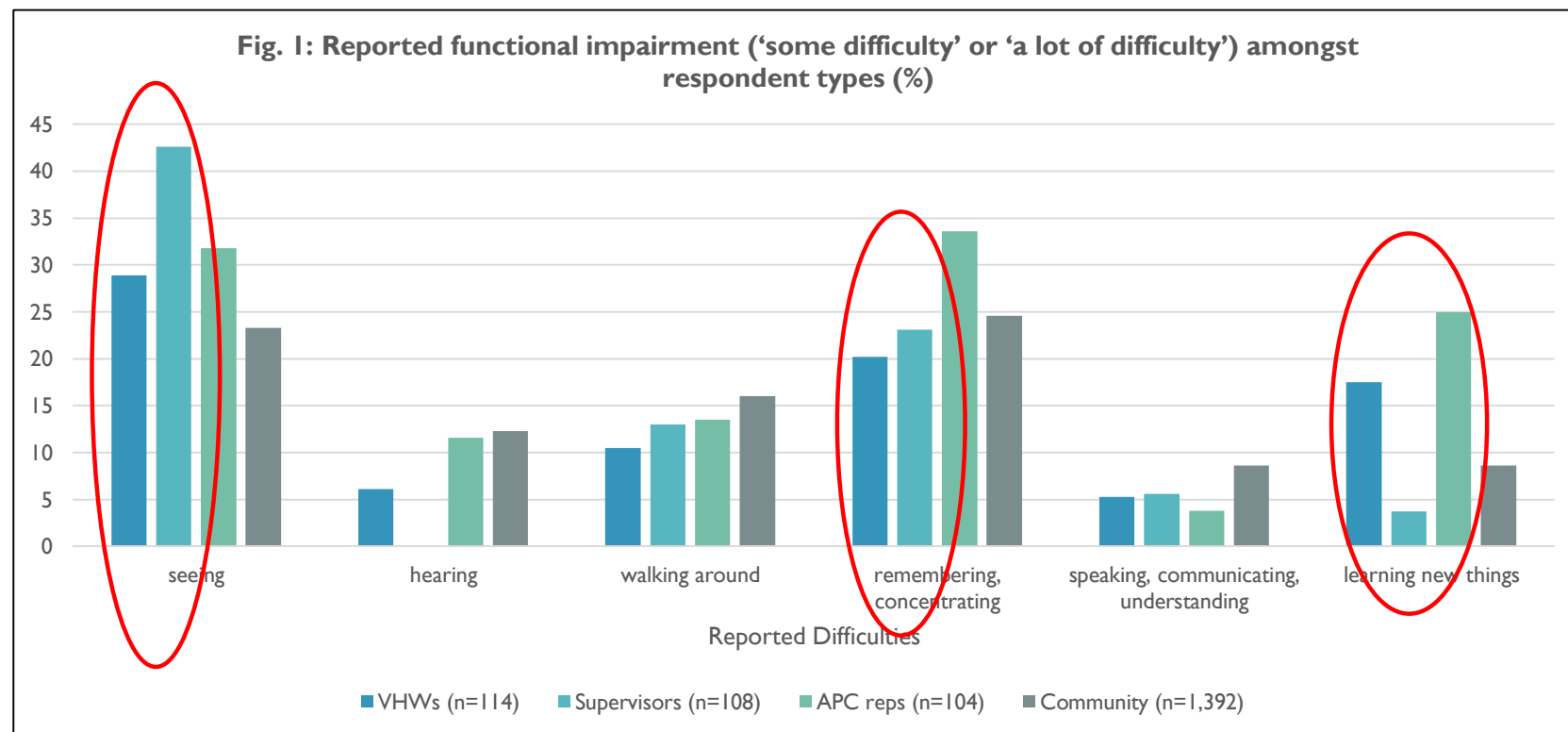
METHODS: survey instrument

- *Washington Group Questions on Functioning*; reported difficulties with:
 - Seeing; hearing; communicating; mobility and movement; self-care; remembering & concentrating; learning new things.
 - For each function, respondents confirm whether they have: 'No Difficulty', 'Some Difficulty', 'A Lot of Difficulty', or whether they 'Cannot Perform the Function'.
- Internationally recognised tool. Developed, tested and adopted by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics: based on WHO's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF).
- Previously translated into Bislama and pre-tested and used for national surveys by the VNSO and other organisations. Recommended and provided by the Disability Desk within the MoJCS.



RESULTS: overall responses

- 45.3 – 58.3% respondents reported to experience ‘some difficulty’ or ‘a lot of difficulty’ across at least one of the functional domains.
- No respondents reported that they ‘cannot perform’ any of the functions identified in the questions.



RESULTS: reported functional impairment



- N = 124: Potential impact:
- Effectiveness of training; delivery of outreach; following guidelines; fine motor clinical function



- N = 108: 36-55yrs (many near retirement)
- Potential impact: quality of support; reaching Aid Posts (24% accessed by walking)



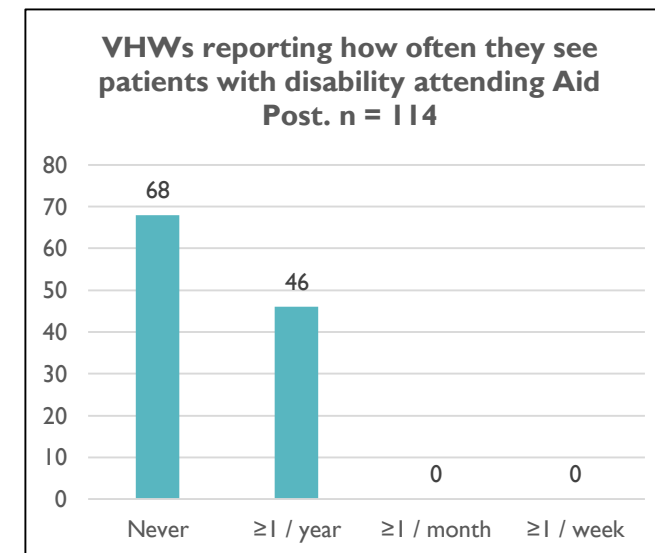
- N = 114: Potential impact:
- Effective management of Aid Post and VHW



- N = 1392: Potential impact:
- Following clinical/health promotion advice; reaching/accessing Aid Post

RESULTS: reported disability at Aid Posts

- At 110 Aid Posts, 61 female and 74 male clients with disabilities were seen in 30 days prior to Survey (3.8% of reported client load of 3,549).
- VHWs reported seeing a person with disabilities:
 - 'never' (60%)
 - 'only one or more per year' (40%).
- Disconnect: low levels of people with disabilities accessing Aid Posts and self reported functional impairment:
 - Poor accessibility of Aid Posts?
 - Limited ability of VHWs to recognise disability?
 - Lack of community acceptance/support for people with disabilities to access services?



DISCUSSION

- Mild-moderate functional impairment noted in all respondent groups (VHWs, nurse supervisors, APC representatives, communities).
- Vision impairment (23.3 - 42.6%); impaired ability to move around (10.5 - 16.0%); difficulty remembering or concentrating (20.2 - 33.6%).
- Has relevance to VHWP and Primary Health Care service planning. May indicate need for:
 - Alternative training models which are accessible to HWs' learning needs/capacities.
 - Training and support for recognition and response to disability care needs.
 - Equipment needs for: HWs (lighting, eyewear, mobility aids); clients (mobility, hearing, visual aids; rehab equipment).
 - Supporting supervisory arrangements for mobility and transport; devolution of supervisory responsibilities.
 - Supporting community structures (with Health Committees) to support access and referral for people with disabilities.
- Sampling would suggest similar levels of functional impairment at higher-levels of PHC system.
 - Further investigation is needed, but MOH must not delay action to improve support to HWs and to clients with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS / IMPLICATIONS

- To meet renewed commitment to strengthened Primary Health Care 'For All', action and resources needed to deliver appropriate mainstream and specialised health care services to people with disabilities:
 1. Strengthen accessibility of mainstream health services to people with disabilities
 2. Strengthen disability-specific health services
 3. Strengthen data and evidence for system planning and response
 4. Ensure disability accessible training and resources
- A detailed report is available to articulate actions to each of these recommendations.



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