



NCDs and disability in the Pacific

Sally Baker

Senior Technical Advisor

Disability Inclusive Development



THE
NOSSAL
INSTITUTE
FOR GLOBAL
HEALTH



- 15% of the world's adults and children have a disability. (World Health Organisation & The World Bank. (2011). *World report on disability*, p. 55.)





- 80% of people with a disability live in developing countries.

(World Health Organisation & The World Bank. (2011). *World Report on disability*, p. 28)

- People with disability are less likely to attend school or access employment, which can lead to greater poverty. (World Health

Organisation & The World Bank. (2011). *World report on disability*, p. 39.)





- People with a disability have limited access to:
 - health care,
 - education
 - livelihood opportunities,
- This contributes to economic vulnerability and social exclusion. (CBM (2012). *Inclusion made easy: A Quick guide to disability in development*, p. 6.)
- Women with a disability experience greater exclusion.

- The incidence of non-communicable diseases in the Pacific, which can result in disability such as vision impairment, stroke and amputation, continues to rise. Siefken, K Schofield, G & Schulenkorf, N (2014) *Laefstael Jenses: An Investigation of Barriers and Facilitators for Healthy Lifestyles of Women in an Urban Pacific Island Context*. In *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, (11) pp 30-37.)





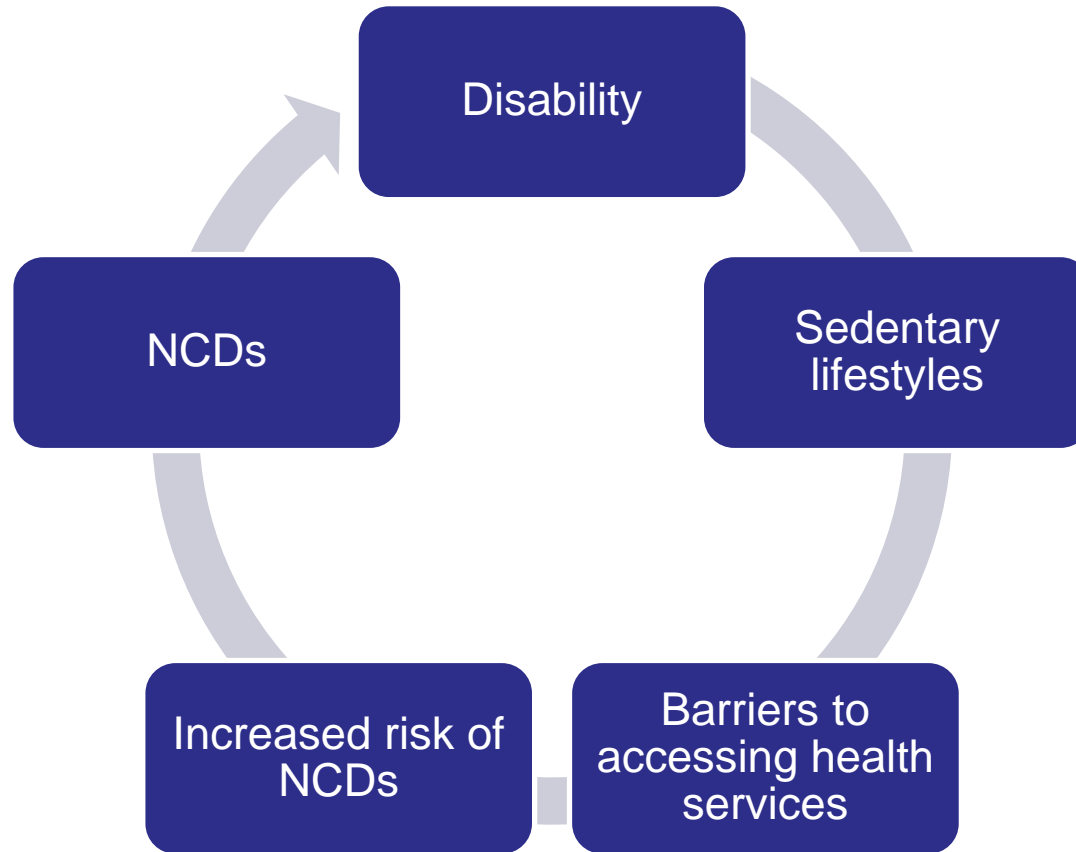
- Cancer → cognitive impairment, pain, depression, fatigue, spinal cord injury, disturbances of gait and balance, vision impairment ([MDGuidelines 2012](#))
- Cardiovascular diseases → hemiplegia, hemiparesis, speech impairment, difficulties with self-care, mobility, communication, amputations ([AIHW 2004](#))
- Diabetes → amputation, blindness, stroke ([ALA 2012](#))
- Chronic respiratory diseases → impaired mobility, self-care, strength, balance ([Eisner, Iribarren et al. 2011](#)).



- In 2009 and 2010, Tonga's Ministry of Health reported:
 - dramatic rises in diabetic limb loss in recent years,
 - That amputation is the second most common cause of major emergency **surgery**. (Byfield, S & Moodie, R (2013) Addressing the world's biggest killers: Non-communicable diseases and the international development agenda: ACFID RESEARCH IN DEVELOPMENT SERIES REPORT NO. 7)



- People with disability are at increased risk of developing **non-communicable diseases** due to increased behavioural risk factors such as:
 - lower physical activity
 - poorer nutrition
 - lower socio-economic factors (as non-communicable diseases disproportionately affect individuals who are poor); and
 - poor access to preventative health programs and health care services. (WHO & World Bank. (2011). [*World report on disability, p. 39.*](#))





- Strengthen health promotion services so that they are disability inclusive.
- Strengthen rehabilitation services.
- Strengthen legislation and policies.
- Undertake research to inform development of disability inclusive health systems.



The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

- Promotes and protects the rights of persons with disability
- Brought into force in 2008
- People with disability have the same right to every kind of opportunity as everyone else
- Is being ratified across the Pacific.



- **Article 25** – right to health
- **Article 26** - right to **rehabilitation services** which promote independence and participation.
- Urges nations to make efforts to ensure that people with a disability have **equal access to health services** (United Nations. (2006). *The Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*, p. 18)



- **People with a disability have a greater need to access health services, and experience higher levels of unmet health needs, than people without a disability.** (WHO & World Bank. (2011). *World Report on disability*, p. 57.)
- **People with a disability report multiple barriers to accessing health services, including cost, stigma and environmental barriers.** (VanLeit, B., Rithy, P. & Channa, S. (2007). *Secondary Prevention of Disabilities in the Cambodian Provinces of Siem Reap and Takeo: Perceptions of and use of the health system to address health conditions associated with disability in children*. Report prepared for Handicap International Brussels.
- **The cost of health services exacerbates the poverty level for people with a disability.** (WHO & World Bank. (2011). *World Report on disability*, p. 10.)
- **People with disability often lack access to accessible health information materials and services.** (UNAIDS, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OCHCHR], WHO. (2009). *Disability and HIV Policy Brief*.)



- Train health staff to support inclusion of people with disability within health services;
- Build disability inclusion into health training curricula;
- Ensure health infrastructure is physically accessible;
- Disseminate health information in a variety of formats (audio, visual) to enable access by people with hearing and vision impairment and/or limited literacy,;



- Raise awareness about health rights and opportunities amongst people with disability themselves, their families and communities;
- Address transportation issues;
- Engage people with disability in decision-making regarding health service delivery;
- Support measures to make health services affordable for people with disability.

- An estimated 85–95 per cent of those who need assistive devices have no access to them.
- People who lack access to appropriate assistive devices are at risk of sustaining secondary impairments . (WHO. (2013). *Assistive devices/technologies: What WHO is doing.*)





- Evidence suggests that difficulties in functioning related to many health conditions can be reduced and quality of life improved with rehabilitation ([WHO 2011](#)).
- Lack of access to rehabilitation services can increase the effects and consequences of disease or injury; delay discharge; limit activities; restrict participation; cause deterioration in health; decrease quality of life and increase use of health and rehabilitation services ([WHO 2011](#)).



- Almost all Pacific countries offer rehabilitation services.
- These are mostly limited to physiotherapy services
- These are overwhelmingly offered at the central level, and are generally not available in rural and remote areas.
- Least available and most needed – occupational therapy, speech therapy and prosthetic and orthotic services. (CBM-Nossal, 2012, Improving Access to and Provision of Disability Services and Facilities People with Disabilities in the Pacific.)

- Story slowly changing...
 - Samoa
 - Fiji
 - PNG
 - WHO
 - CBR
 - PEN
 - Motivation





- Current evidence about NCDs focuses on and demonstrates the impact of premature mortality caused by NCDs on health systems and the economy.
- There is little evidence regarding the impact of NCD-related disability on health systems and the economy.
- WHO has identified NCDs as a priority area for research within its Global Disability Action Plan 2014 – 2021.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Thank you