Raising Awareness of the Need for Rehabilitation

Statement on behalf of the researchers and professionals working in public health.

Question:

What can Public Health researchers and professionals do in a coordinated effort to raise awareness about rehabilitation:

• in the field of Public Health?
• among policy makers?
• among civil society?
• among the private sector?
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General Recommendation
Public health researchers and professionals can assist in creating awareness about Rehabilitation by providing and communicating EVIDENCE and DATA.

The EVIDENCE and DATA may document for example:
• the NEED for rehabilitation services – locally relevant
• the EFFECTIVENESS of INTERVENTIONS
• the WORK FORCE needs and utilisation
• the BARRIERS and ENABLERS to ACCESS to services
• the COST and BENEFITs of rehabilitation services
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COMMUNICATION

Once obtained the evidence and data needs to be clearly communicated with messages relevant to different audiences. Common to all audiences will be the need to explain:

What is Rehabilitation?
- A clear, simple to understand definition is required.
- e.g. rehabilitation aims to improve how we function and thereby life.

Who requires and will benefit from rehabilitation?
- An explanation of who will benefit from rehabilitation which can be adapted to national situations.

Why is rehabilitation important?
- This message should have a core component of the overall benefits to society of rehabilitation.
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EVIDENCE AND DATA

The NEED for POLICY MAKERS & IMPLEMENTERS:
Estimates of the number of people / million population (district level) who will benefit from rehabilitation in:

- childhood
- working age
- after retirement

The INTERVENTIONS:
Different rehabilitation interventions

- Evidence of effectiveness
- Information on cost and benefit
- Information on work force needs
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CREATING AWARENESS AT PROGRAM LEVEL

Communicating “Rehabilitation”
• Demystify rehabilitation and promote a continuum of care.
• Promote a “whole family approach” to rehabilitation.

Training
• Promote training in “Rehabilitation” within Public Health and across all health workers.
• Promote open access online courses on Rehabilitation.

Community based
• Promote the CBR Guidelines and community based interventions.
• Promote appropriate assistive devices and technology.
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CREATING AWARENESS AT POLICY LEVEL

Universal Health Coverage

• Integrate rehabilitation into the Health Systems model and also with specific WHO initiatives – e.g. Mental Health; Ageing; Disaster Resp.

UNCRPD

• Promote UNCRPD Article 26 - Access to Rehabilitation being a right for persons with disabilities.

SDG

• Promote Rehabilitation as a key Strategy to achieve SDG 3 – ensure health and promote well-being for All.

Partnerships

• Partner with relevant civil society organisations in campaigning, advocacy and programme planning; advocating the economic (cost-benefit) argument for rehabilitation with policy makers and the private sector.
CONCLUSION

Public health researchers and professionals have a role to provide well documented EVIDENCE on which informed policy and program decisions can be made.

However it is not sufficient to just write papers, the evidence needs to be COMMUNICATED and that requires translating the evidence and data into APPROPRIATE MESSAGES and using different COMMUNICATION TOOLS e.g. media, workshops.

As a sector we need to be more COLLABORATIVE; we like to be independent, but we can achieve more by working with each other, with governments, civil society and importantly USERS of rehabilitation services.