

Our critique of NZ research on Mobility of Disabled Children

SUMMARIES AND ARTICLE CRITIQUES

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Article critique

Smith, M., Calder-Dawe, O., Carroll, P., Kayes, N., Kearns, R., Lin, E.-Y. (J.), & Witten, K. (Year). Mobility barriers and enablers and their implications for the wellbeing of disabled children and young people in Aotearoa New Zealand: A cross-sectional qualitative study. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), pages.

www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666558121000014

The **qualitative study "Mobility Barriers and Enablers for Disabled Children and Young People in Aotearoa New Zealand"** investigates the mobility experiences of disabled children and young people (CYP) in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Conducted between 2016 and 2018, the research involved 35 disabled CYP aged 12 to 25, who were engaged through face-to-face and go-along interviews. Led by a multidisciplinary team with expertise in public health, mobility, rehabilitation, social justice, and youth studies, the study aimed to identify the key barriers and enablers affecting mobility.

The findings underscore the significant role mobility plays in promoting wellbeing, participation, and independence. They also highlight a number of systemic barriers, such as ableism, inaccessible transport networks, financial challenges, and bureaucratic obstacles. The study advocates for urgent reforms to improve transport accessibility and enhance equity for disabled CYP.

The study offers a comprehensive and well-structured analysis of the mobility challenges faced by disabled CYP in Aotearoa New Zealand. The inclusion of diverse voices and lived experiences provides strong validity to the findings, presenting a compelling case for systemic change.

Use of Evidence and Thematic Analysis

The study utilises **thematic analysis** effectively to categorise key barriers and enablers. The themes, such as ableist attitudes, inconsistent accessibility services, and the financial burden of mobility challenges, are well-supported with **participant quotes** and examples. The findings align with existing literature on disability and mobility, bolstering their credibility. However, the inclusion of additional **quantitative data**—such as statistical comparisons of mobility experiences before and after specific policy interventions—could have provided a more comprehensive perspective on the impact of these barriers.

Policy and Practical Implications

The study makes a compelling case for systemic reforms, such as improving transport accessibility, increasing funding for mobility support, and raising public awareness of ableism. However, the recommendations could have been more actionable. For example, while the study addresses the impact of financial constraints, it doesn't delve into specific funding models or legislative changes that could alleviate these burdens. Incorporating policy frameworks from countries with more advanced mobility accessibility initiatives could further strengthen the recommendations.

Strengths of the Study

One of the key strengths of the study is its **participant-centred approach**, which incorporated face-to-face and go-along interviews to capture the lived experiences of disabled CYP authentically. This methodology provides rich qualitative insights into the real-life challenges faced by disabled individuals. The research team also included individuals with lived experience of disability, which not only added credibility but ensured that the study's perspective was inclusive and grounded in lived reality.

The study is also particularly strong in identifying key barriers, such as **ableism**, **inaccessible transport**, **financial burdens**, and **bureaucratic inefficiencies**. These themes are critical to understanding the challenges that disabled CYP face in achieving mobility, and the study makes a convincing case for the need for policy interventions to address these barriers.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its strengths, the study would have benefited from a **larger participant pool** to enhance the robustness of its findings. While 35 participants offered valuable insights, a broader sample from different regions of New Zealand may have revealed additional trends or regional disparities in mobility barriers. Furthermore, while the study does a thorough job of identifying barriers and enablers, it doesn't include a detailed comparative analysis of international best practices or policy frameworks from other countries that could inform New Zealand's approach to improving mobility accessibility.

Conclusion

Overall, the study offers a **well-researched and insightful exploration** of the mobility barriers and enablers that disabled CYP face in Aotearoa New Zealand. While it successfully highlights the **systemic challenges** and **social inequities** that disabled individuals encounter, there is potential for further research with a larger sample size and a **comparative policy analysis**. The findings are particularly relevant for **assessors**, **policymakers**, and **disability advocates**, highlighting the urgent need for equitable mobility solutions to enhance the wellbeing and independence of disabled young people in Aotearoa.