

Dependency: Wheelchair bound elderly in the community

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Life expectancy has increased from an average of just forty-seven years to about seventy-seven years between 1990 and 2000 (Kemp & Mosqueda, 2004). This was attributed to major improvements in public health, the introduction and widespread use of antibiotics, better medical care, and improvements in medical technology. With the aging of the population, chronic disease has replaced acute illness as a major health threat (Wade & Waters, 1996). All of this may lead to the added possibility of developing a disability due to stroke, spinal cord injury or generalized weakness. An increased life expectancy and the associated changes in the health and functioning of people with disability have important implications on the person and their family.

This presentation deals with the everyday life problems of what an elderly person who is wheelchair bound has to face in her every day problems of mobility and accessibility to the outside world away from her home. The challenges a person with a disability has to face. The supporting elements of the family, friends and local social services available to persons facing similar situations, will be discussed with references made to foreign countries as regards management of disability in the community. The psychological effect disability has on the person will be highlighted.

Finally the limitations of the existing local sources of help and recommendations for their improvements will be listed.