

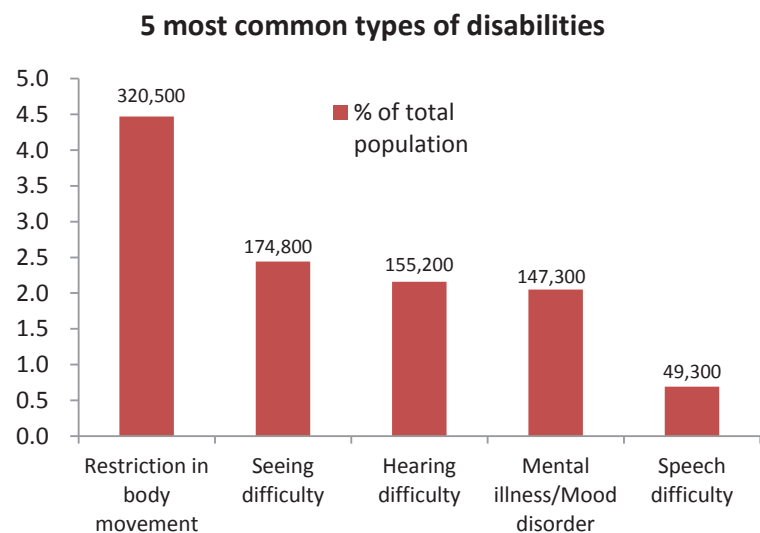
Disability Discrimination in Hong Kong

Overview

As population ages, the number of people with disabilities (PWDs) in Hong Kong has increased substantially in recent years. Notwithstanding increased knowledge of disability in society, the general perception of PWDs remains one-dimensional, with many dismissing the abilities and capabilities of this group. As a result, many PWDs are marginalised and deprived of opportunities in society.

Demographics

- In 2013, there were about 578,600 persons with disabilities in Hong Kong or 8.1% of the total population. The figure was 60% higher than the number in 2007.
- The total number of persons with intellectual disability is estimated to range from 71,000 to 101,000, or 1% to 1.4% of the total population.
- Almost 70% of the PWDs were aged 60 and above.
- There were more women (56.8%) with disabilities than men (43.2%).



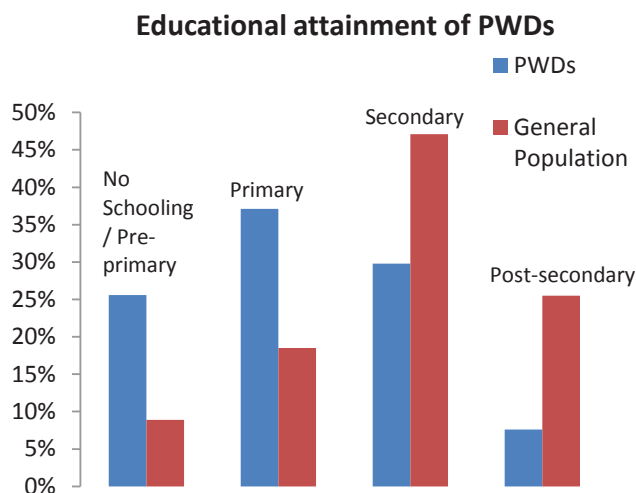
(Source: Special Topics Report No. 62, Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases, Census and Statistics Department)

Economic activity

- The proportion of PWDs who were economically active is far lower than that of the overall population. Of the 558,000 PWDs aged 15 and above, only 14.5% were economically active, while 85.5% or 477,000 were economically inactive. In contrast, only 39.5% of the general population were economically inactive. The unemployment rate in PWDs (6.0%) was almost double the overall rate (3.4%).
- Of those PWDs who were working, 34.0% were employed in elementary occupations, as compared to 20.1% of the overall population.
- About half of the employed PWDs earned less than HK\$10,000 per month. The median monthly employment earnings for PWDs stood at HK\$9,500 in 2013, as against \$13,000 of the total employed population in the same year.
- In 2013, the poverty rate (after recurrent cash intervention) for households with members with disabilities was 29.5%, doubled the figure of the general population (14.5%).

Education

- The educational attainment of persons with disabilities was relatively lower than the general population.
- Excluding persons with intellectual disability, 37.1% of PWDs have had only primary education, as against 18.5% of the total population. A quarter of PWDs have had no schooling or only pre-primary education.
- Only 7.6% of PWDs had received post-secondary education, compared with 25% of the general population who had received tertiary education.



Protection under the Law – Disability Discrimination Ordinance

The Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) came into force in 1996, protecting the public from discrimination, harassment and vilification on the grounds of disability. For years, complaints filed under the DDO continued to take up the largest share of complaints handled by the EOC. In 2017, the EOC handled 327 complaints under the DDO, 67% (220 cases) of which was related to employment.

In order to strengthen the protection of PWDs, the EOC recommended the Government to amend the DDO in the Discrimination Law Review. The recommendations include:

1. Making it a legal requirement to provide reasonable accommodation for PWDs in the areas covered by the legislation;
2. Protecting individuals accompanied by an assistance animal from discrimination.

About the Discrimination Law Review: <http://www.eoc.org.hk/eoc/graphicsfolder/inforcenter/dlr/default.aspx>

Definition of PWD:

The Government defines PWDs as follows when collecting statistics:

- Those who self-identify as having restriction in body movement, seeing difficulty, hearing difficulty and speech difficulty for a period of 6 months or more;
- Those who have been diagnosed by qualified health personnel as having mental illness/mood disorder, autism, specific learning difficulties and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

The definition of disability is much wider under the DDO, and could include:

- total or partial loss of a person's bodily or mental functions;
- total or partial loss of a part of the body;
- the presence of organisms causing disease or illness (such as HIV);
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour, and learning difficulties.

Source of information: *Special Topics Report No. 62, Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases, Census and Statistics Department (2014)*

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