

IC - (20901) - HOW VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES CHOOSE WHERE TO STAY

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Background and objectives

Visually impaired people's actions are informed by tactile, auditory, and other information. However, visually impaired people with intellectual disabilities have difficulties thinking abstractly; therefore, they struggle to understand the meaning of information in their environments. Few studies discuss how visually impaired people with intellectual disabilities perceive space and choose where to stay.

This study aims to clarify the factors that determine where such individuals choose to stay, focusing on visually impaired people with intellectual disabilities in their homes and in welfare service offices for the disabled. Especially since homes in Japan are smaller than those in other developed countries, how to make them comfortable is an important issue.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

A behavioral observation survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted with three visually impaired individuals with intellectual disabilities at X establishment.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

1) The participants' homes were not customized according to their needs. Each person had lived in their current home for over 10 years and walked freely around their homes. They mentioned that their favorite places were windowsills, stair landings, and rooms. They showed a preference for small spaces. At their favorite spots, they enjoyed spending time alone, listening to the sounds of cars and music, and playing games.

2) All participants enjoyed communicating with others. In contrast to their favorite place at home, the participants chose their favorite places, such as the entrance to their room or around their seat, where there was considerable traffic and where they could easily communicate with others.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Visually impaired people with intellectual disabilities spend their time alone and with others depending on the space. Therefore, it is crucial to plan small, comfortable spaces at home and stable places at institutions where many people pass by. Further, considering COVID-19-related limitations on meeting people, communication within facilities must be supplemented with various tools, such as online support.

Palavras-chave : Visually impaired, Welfare service office, Visually impaired people with intellectual disabilities, Home, Spatial cognition, COVID-19