

Knowledge of Disability Rights and the Social Encounters of Students with Disabilities in a Tertiary Institution in South Africa

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ABSTRACT This study explored the knowledge of disability rights among students with disabilities and their social encounters in a tertiary institution in South Africa. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative design where self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19 as well as the Microsoft Excel. From the results, 50.7% of the participants were males, and the majority (41.8%) was morbidity impaired. Whilst at least 76% of the participants were aware of all disability rights, about a third (31.3%) of the respondents reported being verbally abused as compared with other forms of abuses such as physical abuse (4.5%) and sexual harassment (3.0%). In addition, 37.3% of the participants indicated that they experienced stigmatization. Though the study found that an overwhelming majority (76%) of participants were aware of all disability rights, but their social experiences greatly fell short of the rights they should be accorded. The study, therefore, recommends the need to design and embark on 'disability rights' awareness and enforcement programmes among the entire university institutions.