
A minority within a minority: Being transgender and having an intellectual disability

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Abstract

Introduction and Aim: Sexual identity and sexual expression are integral parts of the life of a person, and persons with disability are no exception. However people with disability face prejudice, stigma and discrimination when expressing non-heteronormative sexual identity. This paper explores the experiences of a young person with intellectual disability who identifies as Transgender in a Maltese socio-cultural context.

Method: A qualitative research method was employed to explore the lived experiences of the participant using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Results: The research identifies lack of awareness and acceptance of persons with disability who identify as LGBTQI, amongst family members, professionals and service providers, as well as within the local community. These agents lead to fear and ignorance that contribute to the barriers encountered by persons with disability when expressing their sexual identity.

Discussion: Being a minority within a minority contributes to further infringements of human rights of persons with disability who identify as LGBTQI and hence from the possibility of full participation in society. Thus, persons with disability require further support from organisations that promote the rights of the LGBTQI community. More awareness and education about intersectionality is required to uphold the rights of persons with disability who identify as LGBTQI.

Keywords: Sexuality, Gender, Disability

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