

The Scale of Lower Limb Conditions in Three Selected Districts of Nepal

The Social Impact of the Conditions

Lower limb conditions (LLCs) encompass a wide range of issues like traumatic injuries, congenital abnormalities, neurological, ischemic or musculoskeletal pathologies that may result in pain, mobility limitation, wider disability and psychological impact. Such factors are likely to have profound consequences on individuals, households and society affecting general health and the wider economy. In Nepal, it is unknown what the individual, community and wider social impacts of LLCs are.

Key Findings

Most respondents had their work affected by their lower limb condition, with almost 60% stopping work.

About two-thirds of the individuals had support with their day-to-day activities.

Activities of daily living, such as standing up, walking and activity, were difficult for many. This links to the poor infrastructure available.

The built environment around individuals with LLCs hinders the ability to conduct activities



The aim of this document is to highlight the key findings and policy implications with respect to the effects that lower limb conditions have on the individual. The focus will be on the impacts of LLCs on work, abilities to conduct activities and the support that individuals receive.

Understanding how someone is living with a LLC at the individual, household and community levels informs about the effects that the condition has on the local and wider economy, health system and their support network. It will also highlight any issues about perception of people who have LLCs

Policies will focus on support for individuals with LLCs to ensure that opportunities will be available to play as full a part in household and community life as is desired. The document will be of use to both health and social support officials working at a national and local level, NGOs working to support individuals with transient or permanent disabilities, as well as the wider policy community in Nepal.

The CREHPA Services and the University of Southampton jointly undertook this study to explore the burden and related implications of LLCs in three di-verse districts of Nepal: Dolakha, Dang and Lamjung, chosen to represent three different terrains. In July, 2021 2,525 households were screened for Lower Limb Conditions. Surveys were conducted on 500 individuals with an LLC from these three districts. Further in-depth interviews were conducted on 15 of these individuals.

Key Findings

Over 90% of individuals with a LLC stated that their occupation or work had been affected by their condition

Almost 60% stated that they had stopped work due to their LLC. Almost half also stated that they had changed their work. This has a large effect on household finances and the economy.

Three out of every five people with LLCs (60.4%) had someone to assist them with day-to-day activities. Most help was unpaid.

Almost 50% of the respondents felt that they did need someone else to give additional assistance to them, even if they already had someone.

There were a sizeable proportion of individuals who could not perform,



or only with difficulty, basic tasks

Over 20% of respondents had severe issues with cleaning and dressing, while 25% could only cut their toenails with moderate or worse difficulty.

The ability to conduct activities of daily living varied depending on the task. The percentages who have severe or extreme problems with different activities are:

Activity	%
Looking after yourself	15.8
Moving around inside	20.8
Light activity	26.4
Walking 100m	28.4
Getting out of home	29.4
Care of household	46.2
Standing for long periods	51.6
Standing up from sitting	61.4
Walking 1km	70.4
Moderate activity	77.4
Vigorous activity	86.0

Most respondents found it simple to get help from family members, although gaining help from friends, co-workers and neighbours was seen to be more difficult.

Most help was given by family members, although 11% of LLC sufferers did not have any family members to ask.

Many individuals felt that they could participate in activities. However a sizeable proportion of individuals did not feel they could make their own choices or were not accepted or respected.

A quarter of respondents stated that they felt that they were a burden on society. Over 50% stated that there were few expectations of them, and 15% said that they could not make a choice about their life.

Quotes from Individuals

"It has impacted my life a lot. I cannot walk like before. I can hardly go to the toilet by myself" (68 year old female)

"I cannot (walk). I walk to the toilet with much difficulty and with the help of cane. I drag my other leg with the aid of stick. I shiver while walking and I feel like I am about to fall. I depend on others for food. I have been cursed. I was doing small jobs and surviving. But now, I depend on others for livelihood" (58 year old male)

"People in the surrounding area also look at it in a bad way.....shouting without any reasons, saying that I can't do anything, and making me feel down.....They dominate me saying that I'm disabled and can do nothing....Mainly, no one listens to the person who doesn't earn anything" (32 year old male)

"The villagers go and talk behind my back; they don't let me eat. They don't tell me anything. They do so because I cannot walk" (75 year old male)

"I am in terrible condition. People here do not care about me. There is no one for poor like me." (58 year old male)

Recommendations

Support for individuals with LLCs who want and can work

Many individuals have had to change or stop work due to their condition. Ensuring there is high level support for people with disabilities to continue with their work, or bridging loans to ensure that individuals can recommence work after recovery, will support individuals and the economy.

Design an appropriate built environment

Individuals often have to navigate difficult terrain with lower limb issues. Where possible an accessible design for planned building should be included. Communities should be encouraged to consider people with mobility issues within development.

High level promotion of equity for people with disabilities and mobility issues

Policies for inclusion and support of individuals with disabilities, both permanent and temporary, should be mainstreamed. Inclusivity of individuals is promoted by politicians and will encourage communities and individuals to support people with mobility issues due to their LLCs.

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