

Poster presentation

## **Living with spinal deformities: the Indian experience**

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India has the largest number of cases of spinal deformities in the world. The major causes of such deformities are malnutrition, water impurities, post-polio complications, calcium deficiency, congenital conditions, social violence and accidents. In India, there are very few medical centers which can perform corrective surgery and even fewer capable of rehabilitation. Community based rehabilitation projects also lack the infra-structure and expertise to deal with spinal deformity cases. Individuals with spinal deformities are marginalized, stigmatized and discriminated in the society. Folklores and religious scripture reinforce the prejudices against individuals with a hunchback or crooked spine. Some charitable and religious institutions do cater to the basic needs of these individuals; however, their meaningful participation in social life and in proper employment remain distant goals.