

# **Access to and Utilization of Reproductive Health Services by Women with Disabilities in Rural Uganda.**

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The extent of access to and utilization of reproductive health services by rural women with disabilities in Uganda is not very clear. A cross sectional study uses a sample of 187 rural women with disabilities in Kabale district and 10 key informants to investigate access to and utilization of Reproductive Health services by women with disabilities in Rural Uganda.

The study revealed that access to and utilization of reproductive health services by rural women with disabilities increases with age. Also, the more educated the woman is, the more the possibility of accessing and utilizing reproductive health services. Married women accessed and utilized reproductive health services more than their unmarried counterparts while rural women with disabilities who used relatives as the source of information regarding reproductive health accessed and utilized reproductive health services more than those who used other sources. It was also found out that the nature of disability affected the women's ability to utilize the family planning and delivery services. Stigma against women with disabilities was found to be high in rural Uganda and many men took advantage of young girls with disabilities and wanted them for sex at night, but did not want to identify with them for marriage. Many health facilities in place do not favour women with disabilities and many have to move long distances to the health facility.

The government and concerned organizations should create awareness among RWWDs and the local community. Programmes targeting RWWDs should be put in place and relatives of RWWDs should be encouraged to offer them support. There is need for putting in place income generating projects for women with disabilities, to enable them have money for health services.

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