Experiences of Disability Services for Young Adults with Disabilities and their Families Living in Rural Australia

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Summary of the research

The experience of disability for young adults living in rural Australia is broad, encompassing a variety of aspects in the lives of both young adults and their families. Reducing the impact of disability for families, and enabling a positive and meaningful lifestyle for the young adult, is often achieved through a disability service. For some, these services are used to combat the limitations of the rural environment such as limited engagement in employment, leisure, and social opportunities. This limited engagement is not necessarily caused by the young adults’ impairment, but rather the inability for the rural environment to meet their needs.

This study investigated both young adults and their mothers’ experiences of disability within the rural context. Semi-structured interviews were used. Interpretive phenomenological analysis of these interviews gave rise to several issues associated with living in a rural area and accessing disability services. These issues are discussed within three themes encompassing the impact of disability, the influences of service delivery, and expression of autonomy. This study highlights a need for change in service delivery for young adults with disabilities living in rural areas. Improving access to services in rural areas will assist young adults to successfully transition to adulthood and be able, as much as possible, to engage in an independent and autonomous life.

radiate podiatry program.