



Kirsty Donald

Dr Donald is a Paediatric Neurologist with an interest in the developmental disabilities as they manifest and are managed in resource limited settings such as South Africa. Specific interests include the preventable causes of neurodisability such as alcohol and methamphetamine exposure, organophosphate poisoning and the neurological and neurocognitive complications of HIV. She leads a clinical service which sees approximately 4000 children with developmental problems and neurodisability every year. Dr Donald is secretary of the South African Paediatric Neurology and Development Association. She is actively involved in current research projects across all of the fields listed above with collaborations locally and internationally and is involved with both undergraduate and post-graduate supervision and training.

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Abstract

Pediatric cerebral palsy in Africa: Where are we?

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Cerebral palsy is the most common cause of physical disability in children worldwide. However, little is reported on this condition in the African context. Doctors from 22 countries in Africa, and representatives from a further 5 countries outside Africa, met to discuss the challenges in the evaluation and management of children with cerebral palsy in Africa and to propose service needs and further research. Basic care is limited by the poor availability of diagnostic facilities or medical personnel with experience and expertise in managing cerebral palsy, exacerbated by lack of available interventions such as medications, surgical procedures, or even regular therapy input. Relevant guidelines are lacking. In order to guide services for children with existing disabilities, to effectively target the main etiologies and to develop preventive strategies for the continent, research priorities must include multicenter collaborative studies looking at the prevalence, risk factors, and treatment of cerebral palsy.

How to cite this:

Donald K. Pediatric cerebral palsy in Africa: Where are we? Sudan J Paediatr 2015; 15(1):92 - 93.
