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Primary health care and community-based rehabilitation in Iran: Opportunities and challenges

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Iran became one of the leading countries in the implementation of Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs in the Asia Pacific region at the national level. CBR programs have been implemented in all 31 Iranian provinces. In the early ages, CBR programs were implemented through collaboration with the Primary Health Care (PHC) system in the Ministry of Health. The PHC had an inclusive net in all villages in Iran. The participation of PHC's health workers consisted of: (1) identification,

evaluation and assessment of people with disabilities in their areas; (2) educating the family with using booklets; (3) referral to higher levels of specialized services; and, (4) treatment and medical rehabilitation. Despite the collaboration with the Primary Health Care, there were some challenges for the development and implementation of CBR programs in Iran. The medical approach to CBR program has been criticized because many dimensions of disability, such as the social, economic, and cultural factors are absent. It was emphasized that there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to CBR programs. This paper aims to explore the best practices of PHC for CBR programs in Iran.

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