

14th Annual Brain Death Congress

November 22-23, 2022 | Webinar

Volume : 05

The Revolution in Rehabilitation: Is Integrated State of the Art Rehabilitation Services a Reality on the African Continent?

Critical Components and Facts from a South African Perspective

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The facts are hard to dispute: Rehabilitation on the entire African continent is lacking. This has led to a high prevalence of disability. People With Disability (PWD) is the second largest population, after those living with HIV/AIDS and yet less than 3% of them receive ongoing rehabilitation or health care of any kind. This is despite the fact that 70% of PWD could be rehabilitated. This is now further exacerbated by the long term effects of COVID-19. Worldwide advancement in neuro-rehabilitation is a growing movement but still grossly neglected. There is as yet no focus on the integration of what our big needs in rehabilitation research are. These must be rooted in our "Africaness" – what are this continent's facts and practices? This piecemeal, reductionist approach so far, fails to provide holistic, integrated client-centered services that are contextually specific with a focus on health promotion and disease prevention. The process of creating a health system that is responsive to both disability and rehabilitation on a holistic level must be the vision. This is the journey that we at RIA have embarked on. Our mission is to coordinate and launch the Total Integrated Rehabilitation service. We argue for rehabilitation as a vehicle for addressing the social determinants of health and wellness where rehabilitation practitioners play a critical role in addressing the inequities within this arena.

Biography

Nadia is passionate about holistic health care and accessibility. She has worked internationally and locally across Africa, Europe and the Middle East, building and shaping services. She received her MBA in the United Kingdom in Health Management and Leadership and her Honour's in Speech Therapy and Audiology locally from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. She is an internationally recognized neuro-rehabilitation specialist. Her project management skills include establishing rehabilitation in educational and tertiary hospital settings to ensure that disability is kept at the top of governmental agendas. Nadia has pioneered the development of specific tertiary academic training programmes to ensure sustainability of services; lead the amalgamation of social service programmes and lectured to health professionals and educators internationally

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Abstract received : November 21, 2022 | Abstract accepted : November 23, 2022 | Abstract published : 15-12-2022