

The Disability Health Rights Act and Oral Health Policy for Persons with Disabilities

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Purpose: This presentation reviews the background and significance of the Act on Guaranteeing the Right to Health and Access to Medical Services for Persons with Disabilities and examines its role as the legal basis for health rights and healthcare access for persons with disabilities in Korea. It also reviews the major oral health policies for persons with disabilities in Korea and suggests future directions for improvement.

Methods: A literature and policy review was conducted on the Disability Health Rights Act and related regulations, national and local oral health policies, regional special care dental centers, the insurance incentive system, the disability dental home doctor pilot program, and community integrated care initiatives.

Results: Enforced in 2017, the Act established the state's responsibility to guarantee health rights for persons with disabilities and provided the legal basis for comprehensive health planning, oral health services, and the home doctor system. Current oral health policy includes the disability dental home doctor pilot program, central and regional special care dental centers, the insurance incentive system, and integrated care services including visiting dental care and community linkage. However, important limitations remain, including restricted accessibility, regional disparities, insufficient service delivery, low participation with limited reimbursement, and weak community linkage.

Conclusion: Sustainable oral health policy requires a shift from fragmented treatment-centered support to an integrated dental care system linking prevention, education, specialized treatment, visiting dental services, and community care. Dentists should play a central role in policy development and implementation, supported by collaboration among healthcare, welfare, public institutions, communities, caregivers, and social service agencies.

Profile

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