

VU UNIVERSITY AMSTERDAM Faculty of Psychology and Education

“Yes, I can!”

The art of social participation of persons with visual impairments

Dr Sabina Kef
in collaboration with Karen Sleurink MSc

Disability Studies Conference, 2013

CONTENT

- 1) Theoretical framework
 - Challenges of visual impairments
 - Social participation
 - Psychosocial functioning
- 2) Aim
- 3) Method
- 4) Results
- 5) Conclusion & Discussion

Disability Studies Conference, 2013

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS (VI)

Direct effects of visual impairment

- > imitation communication
- > mobility energy
- > appearance

Indirect effects of visual impairment

- > social support social contacts
- > stigmatisation dependency
- > confidence/self-esteem

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ICF. Social participation is an interplay between person and environment, between possibilities and barriers.

“Participation: the involvement in life situations”

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION: DOMAINS AND RESEARCH RESULTS

Domains of social participation (Gold et al 2012):

- * education and employment
- * relationships
- * leisure activities

Mixed scientific results so far on social participation and VI: explanations →

- clinical or community based samples
- country/culture
- which decade/period: paradigm
- methodological design

AIM

Social participation of persons with VI seems at risk: but not for everyone with a visual impairment.

How is the social participation of adolescents and young adults with visual impairments in the Netherlands?


What is the association between social participation and psychological functioning?

PARTICIPANTS

1996 (T1)	2004/2005 (T2)	2010 (T3)
Sample 1 14-24 years old N= 316	Sample 1 22-32 years old N=205	Sample 1 28-38 years old N=179
Psychosocial functioning, coping, social network	Psychosocial functioning, social network, personality	Psychosocial functioning, social network, (transition to) parenting

▶ **male** 56% **blind** 22%
female 44% **partially sighted** 78%

progressive 38%
stable 62%



7 Disability Studies Conference, 2013 Fakultät der Psychologie an Pedagogik

OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN OUR LARGER LONGITUDINAL STUDY

- Sample 2: 154 adolescents VI in 2004 and 112 of them in 2010
- 160 parents of adolescents in 2005
- 10 siblings of adolescents in 2005
- 10 best friends of adolescents in 2005
- 40 itinerant teachers of adolescents in 2005
- 96 romantic partners of young adults in 2010
- 35 professionals working in rehabilitation in 2010
- 92 young persons without visual disabilities in 2010

8 Disability Studies Conference, 2013 Fakultät der Psychologie an Pedagogik

METHOD: PROCEDURE

Computer Assisted Personal Interviews mixed with Telephone interviews (CATI)

Interviews and questionnaires are composed of standardized reliable questionnaires and qualitative open-end questions.

Some compensating strategies in datacollection were necessary because of the visual impairment.

9 Disability Studies Conference, 2013 Fakultät der Psychologie an Pedagogik

METHOD: INSTRUMENTS

Education and work: descriptive closed and open questions

Network characteristics:

- * the Social Network Map (Tracy & Whittaker, 1990)
- * loneliness questionnaire (De Jong-Gierveld, 1985)
 - 11 items, emotional, social and total loneliness
 - Yes, more or less, no
- * well-being circle of friends (based on Cantrill-scale)
 - 1 item (range 1 (really bad) to 10 (really good))

10 Disability Studies Conference, 2013 Fakultät der Psychologie an Pedagogik

METHOD: INSTRUMENTS

Romantic relationship characteristics:

- * Partner: yes/no
- * Living together: yes/no

Psychological:

- * Acceptation of Visual Impairment:
 - Nottingham Adjustment Scale (Dodds et al., 1994)
 - 10 items, 5-point Likert-scale
- * Self-esteem: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)
 - 10 items, 4-point Likert-scale

11 Disability Studies Conference, 2013 Fakultät der Psychologie an Pedagogik

RESULTS: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

→ Yes, they participate but:

- * Problems with accessibility of course materials
- * Longer time to complete study
- * Difficulties in finding jobs (however in our relatively integrated participant group the percentage with a (parttime) job is quite high)
- * Jobs don't always fit with education level /study

12 Disability Studies Conference, 2013 Fakultät der Psychologie an Pedagogik


RESULTS: RELATIONSHIPS

- Smaller networks
- Difficulties in dating and feelings in competence for starting and maintaining romantic relationships
- More exclusion by classmates/peers
- Less leisure activities, more time spent at home

(see also Kef, 1997; Wolffe & Sacks, 1997; Kef, 1999; Kef, Hox, & Habekothé, 2000; Kef, 2005; Kef & Bos, 2006; Gold, Shaw, & Wolffe, 2012)

RESULTS: ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

		1996 14-24	2004 22-32	2010 28-38
partner	yes	54	89	107
	no	121	68	68
living together	yes	4	48	85
	no	171	109	90



RESULTS LONELINESS AND WELL-BEING CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Table: Longitudinal results of evaluation of "Social Relationships"

	N	T1	T2	T3	F	df	p
Loneliness total	156	Mean 2.32 SD 2.37	Mean 2.01 SD 2.52	Mean 1.95 SD 2.60	5.31	(2, 310)	0.005
Loneliness	156	Mean 1.35 SD 1.68	Mean 1.35 SD 1.79	Mean 1.33 SD 0.81	0.01	(1, 310)	n.s.
Emotional Loneliness	156	Mean 0.97 SD 1.04	Mean 0.66 SD 0.99	Mean 1.27 SD 1.41	17.40	(1, 88)	< 0.001
Social Loneliness	156	Mean 7.85 SD 2.06	Mean 7.76 SD 1.59	Mean 7.66 SD 1.42	0.73	(1, 265.04)	n.s.
Wellbeing							

Table: Contrast results of evaluation of "Social Relationships"

	T1-T2			T2-T3		
	F	df	p	F	df	p
Loneliness total	2.48	(1, 155)	n.s.	11.52	(1, 155)	0.001
Loneliness	11.97	(1, 155)	0.001	30.80	(1, 155)	< 0.001
social						

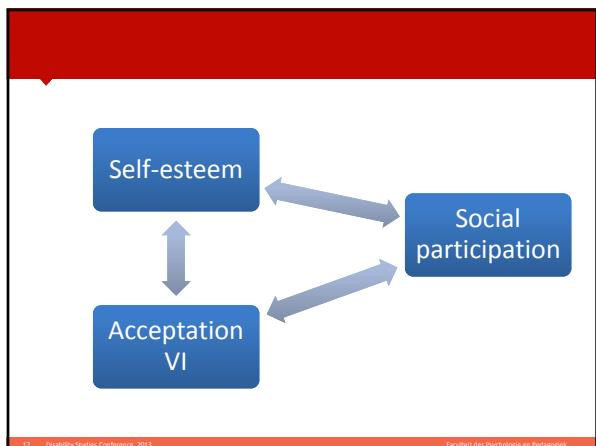
RESULTS: SELF-ESTEEM AND ACCEPTATION OF VI

Longitudinal results of psychosocial functioning

	N	T1	T2	T3	F	df	p
Self-esteem	156	Mean 3.31 SD 0.54	Mean 3.33 SD 0.53	Mean 3.43 SD 0.52	3.76	(2, 310)	0.024
Handicap-acceptation	154	Mean 4.08 SD 0.65	Mean 4.28 SD 0.56	Mean 4.26 SD 0.62	9.01	(1, 269.58)	< 0.001

Table: Contrasts of psychosocial functioning

	T1-T2			T2-T3		
	F	df	p	F	df	p
Self-esteem	0.25	(1, 155)	n.s.	4.72	(1, 155)	0.031
Handicap-acceptation	15.01	(1, 153)	< 0.001	0.16	(1, 153)	n.s.
Acceptation VI						



SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem seems to be significantly, positively related to:

- relatively more informal network members in the network (T1)
- higher well-being with circle of friends
- better outcomes on Education and Employment (T2, T3)

Self-esteem seems to be significantly, negatively related to:

- Emotional Loneliness
- Social Loneliness
- Total Loneliness

ACCEPTATION OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Acceptation of VI seems to be significantly, positively related to:

- better outcomes on participation in Education and Employment
- amount of family members in the total network
- percentage of informal network members in the total network
- well-being with circle of friends

Acceptation of VI seems to be significantly, negatively related to:

- emotional loneliness
- social loneliness
- total loneliness

19 Disability Studies Conference, 2013

Faculteit der Psychologie en Pedagogiek

CONCLUSION LONGITUDINAL RESULTS

- No alarming participation scores of persons with VI on domain Education and Employment in our study, however some barriers are found
- Social networks of persons with VI are still relatively small, but seem to increase in size within time
- The percentage of persons VI with a partner increased significantly, but compared to Dutch figures on persons without disabilities it is still lower.

20 Disability Studies Conference, 2013

Faculteit der Psychologie en Pedagogiek

CONCLUSION LONGITUDINAL RESULTS

- Self-esteem increased significantly, especially between late twenties and mid thirties
- Acceptation of VI increased significantly, especially between adolescence and young adulthood
- Psychological functioning seems to be significantly associated with participation, future analysis will reveal the direction
- We do find variation, while everybody in our study has a visual impairment: other personal characteristics (like acceptance) and environment play a role.

21 Disability Studies Conference, 2013

Faculteit der Psychologie en Pedagogiek

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Yes, together we can!



Questions?

More information on: www.psy.vu.nl/verderkijken

We would like to thank all persons that cooperated in our projects

22 Disability Studies Conference, 2013

Faculteit der Psychologie en Pedagogiek