

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Disability due to leprosy negatively impacts emotional, social, and financial burdens on their families which will affect their quality of life. However, it can be prevented through self-care. Self-care involves teaching and supporting them how to look after their hands and feet to prevent and manage ulcers. For this self-help groups are formed by the NGOs/INGOs to provide self-care training in order to improve health conditions among leprosy-affected individuals. Effective self-care programs require adequate resources, effective monitoring, clear guidelines, and collaboration among stakeholders and external partners to address the needs of people with leprosy-related disabilities. The government should take the initiative to address these issues which is essential to achieving sustainable disability prevention through self-care.

**Objective:** To explore the acceptability of self-care practices among people affected by leprosy and stakeholders in the Rupandehi district of Nepal.

**Method:** This qualitative study based on in-depth interviews, key-informant interview and focus group discussion with the people affected by leprosy and stakeholders in Rupandehi district which is known to be a leprosy endemic district in Nepal. Qualitative data was used to explore acceptability of self-care practices and identify facilitators barriers in accepting self-care practices. A total of 28 respondents were interviewed. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data to identify themes, explore emerging patterns and analysis qualitative data based on a TFA framework.

**Result:** Leprosy affected people have accepted the self-care practices and have positive attitude towards it. However, due to poverty, lack of resources and availability of time they feel impossible to practice self-care. To make it worse, less priority was given by the government sector to support self-care practices. Improving perception, minimizing stigma regarding self-care practices as well as improving service providers attitude and support from nongovernmental organization were identified as facilitators.

**Conclusion:** Despite the awareness and acceptance, self-care is not yet practiced. The program implementor should focus on the availability of resources and policy for poverty reduction.

**Keywords:** Leprosy, self-care practices, acceptability, Rupandehi, Nepal