"YOU'RE PRETENDING, YOU DON'T NEED A WHEELCHAIR":
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the requirements of children and adolescents with severe spinal cord injuries. The requirements are expressed by the parents of the children and by adolescents and are in contrast to official views of their "needs".

There is no literature on the needs of these children and adolescents. The thesis thus begins with an examination of the literature on the needs of people with disabilities and people with spinal cord injury. Proponents of the social model of disability, which is based on the experiences of people with disabilities, contend that the main requirements of people with disabilities is ending their social marginalisation, and it is hypothesised that the requirements of the children and adolescents will be related to ending social marginalisation.

Open-ended unstructured interviews with parents, parents and adolescents and adolescents alone (a total of 20 interviews) provided data for analysis. Analysis of the data shows that the requirements of the children and adolescents, like adults with spinal cord injuries, differ from those of people with disabilities in that there are important concerns in addition to marginalisation.
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