Editorial

Response to a Letter to the Editor

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Dear Zelalem,

Thank you sincerely for your profoundly thoughtful and well-articulated letter in response to the recent article by Francis and Nongpoh. It was a privilege for our editorial team to read your reflections, and I want to personally express our appreciation for the depth, compassion, and clarity with which you raised such critical issues in the field of cerebral palsy rehabilitation.

What immediately stood out to us in your letter was your ability to bridge rigorous evidence with the lived realities of children, families, and professionals—especially in contexts where resources are limited and the pressure to “correct” or “normalize” disability is high. Your points around the ethical implications of prolonged, impairment-focused therapy were especially moving. Too often, these approaches are assumed to be beneficial without considering their emotional, physical, and developmental costs. Your reminder that children have a right to joy, spontaneity, and play—not just progress measured in clinic terms—was both powerful and necessary.

We were also deeply touched by your discussion of the often invisible burden placed on caregivers. You voiced what many parents may feel but are rarely given the space to express: the fatigue, guilt, and emotional strain that can come from being caught in a cycle of never-ending therapy goals, sometimes at the expense of the child’s broader well-being. You brought attention to this dynamic with empathy and honesty, and we believe it’s a conversation that needs to be heard far more widely in the rehabilitation community.

Your advocacy for a shift toward participation-based, family-centered rehabilitation grounded in the "F-words" framework (Function, Family, Fitness, Fun, Friends, and Future) aligns closely with the values we seek to promote through this journal. Your call for us to see assistive technologies not as a “last resort” but as tools for liberation and access also reflects an urgently needed reframing in clinical mindsets—especially in places where stigma and misconceptions persist.

We were especially grateful that you rooted your arguments in both global research and the local context of Ethiopia, drawing from your own clinical and academic work. It adds depth and relevance that is so often missing in top-down policy conversations. Your insights remind us that we must not only rethink the what and how of therapy—but also the why. And that “why” must be centered on the child’s lived experience, autonomy, and right to thrive—not just survive.

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At Disability, CBR and Inclusive Development Journal, we strive to be a platform where these kinds of human-centered, equity-driven discussions can flourish. Your contribution exemplifies this spirit and adds immense value to the ongoing global dialogue around disability, rehabilitation, and inclusive practice.

Thank you once again for your contribution, for your courage in naming uncomfortable truths, and for your commitment to dignity-based care. We look forward to continuing this important conversation with you and others who share your vision of rehabilitation as a tool for empowerment and inclusion.

With deep appreciation and warm regards,
Solomon Mekonnen
Editor, Disability, CBR and Inclusive Development Journal
On behalf of the Editorial Team