



# How people are treated differently in healthcare

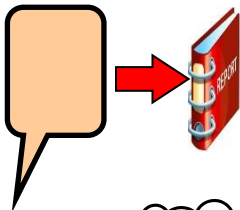


# What is in this book

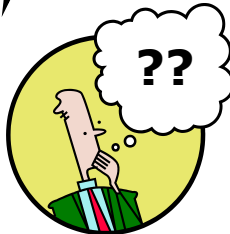
Inside this book you will read about:



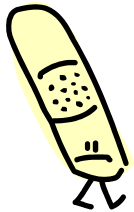
**Who wrote this book  
Why this work was done**



**How the work was done**



**Why some discrimination  
is hard to understand**



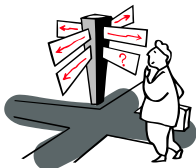
**Problems in healthcare**



**Examples of discrimination  
when going to a doctor**



**Problems in getting medical help**



**What next?**

## Who wrote this book



The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights wrote this book.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is called FRA for short.

FRA is an organisation.

An organisation is a group of people working together.



FRA looked at discrimination that happens when people are sick and need help from a doctor.

Discrimination is when you are treated worse than others just because they are different in one way or another.



For example, you may be discriminated against because:

- you are woman or a man,
- you are old or young,
- you are gay,
- you have a disability or learning difficulty,
- you have a different skin colour.



This book will tell you about FRA's work on how people might be treated differently in healthcare and on multiple discrimination in healthcare.



Multiple discrimination is when you are treated worse than others because you are different in more than 1 way.

For example, because you are:

- woman and young
- with a disability and a different skin colour.

Sometimes only people who are different in more than one way are discriminated against.



For example, sometimes women with a disability cannot have babies because of what the doctor has done to their body without asking the women.

This does not happen to all women.

This does not happen to everyone with a disability. It only happens to women with a disability.

This is multiple discrimination.

## Why this work was done



Rights are things that should happen for everyone. For example, the right to good health and the right to health services.



There are lots of laws to protect your rights. These laws try to stop discrimination. For example, the law says that women and men must be treated in the same way.



Other laws say that people with disabilities have the right to be treated the same as people without disability

Most laws look at discrimination that happens to people that are different in 1 way.

For example, they are a woman, or they have a disability.



There are not many laws that look at discrimination that happens to people that are different in more than 1 way.

For example:

- someone who is a woman and has a disability
- someone who is gay and black.

FRA did this work to learn more about discrimination of people who are different in more than 1 way.



FRA wanted to know about the problems these people have to get medical help.



## How the work was done



FRA looked at healthcare in 5 countries.

The 5 countries were:



Austria



Czech Republic



Italy



Sweden



United Kingdom

FRA looked at laws in these 5 countries.



FRA also looked at the work of the governments in these 5 countries.

FRA talked to the people who needed medical help in these 5 countries.



FRA talked to people

who were different in 2 or 3 ways:



- All had a different skin colour
- Some were old people
- Some were old people with a disability
- Some were young women who were maybe having a baby



- Some were young people with an intellectual disability.



FRA also talked to:

- Doctors and nurses
- Organisations that support people who are different
- Organisations that look after the rights of people
- Politicians
- Lawyers.



For example, FRA asked:

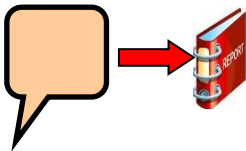
- What health problems do you have?
- Do you get help easily when you have a problem?
- What do you need to have good health?
- Have you been treated unfairly at the doctors?
- What can you do if you are treated unfairly?



This book tells what they said.

It tells of the discrimination that happens when people go to the doctor.

It also tells of discrimination that happens to people that are different in more than 1 way.



# Why some discrimination is hard to understand



Most laws look at one type of discrimination at a time.

Few laws look at multiple discrimination.

Multiple discrimination is when several types of discrimination happen together to 1 person.

Only 6 countries in Europe have laws that also look at multiple discrimination.

Multiple discrimination is often not well explained.

This makes it hard to understand the laws.

It makes it hard to understand what is multiple discrimination and how people are protected.

Some types of differences are better protected than others.

For example, people with different skin colours and women

are better protected than

old people, young people and people with disabilities.

This makes it hard

to protect people against multiple discrimination.



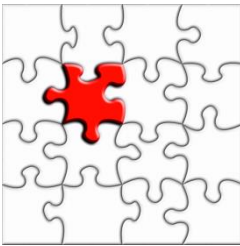


If laws are hard to understand,  
it is harder for lawyers to protect people  
who have been treated unfairly.



This means there are not many examples of people who  
were treated unfairly.

Because of that, lawyers must try to understand the laws  
with no help from other lawyer's work.



There is little information on discrimination in healthcare.

There is also little information  
on differences between people who need a doctor.

This makes it hard to know  
when people are treated unfairly  
because they are different.

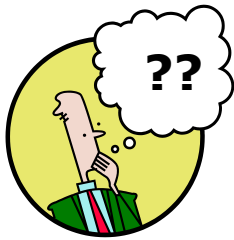
## Problems in healthcare

Some people speak different languages.

Some people have a disability  
and have problems speaking.

It is sometimes difficult for doctors and nurses  
to understand what people say.

Sometimes people do not understand  
what doctors and nurses say.



Often there is no one to help  
when talking to the doctor.

There is no one to speak to in the same language.  
There is no easy-to-read information.

This means it is hard for people to explain what is wrong.  
This means it is hard for people to understand  
what the doctors ask.

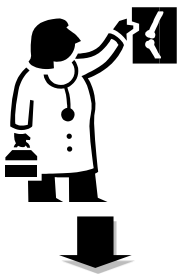
Sometimes hospitals provide no information about:



- the different types of medical help
- what treatment can help
- what patients need to do.

Medical help and medicine cost money.

This is a problem for many people  
who are poor  
or have jobs which pay little.



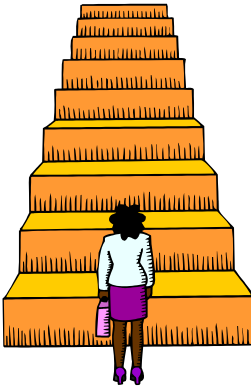
Many countries now have less money.

They spend less money on  
helping people to pay for medical help.

Some people cannot get free medical help  
if they do not have the right papers.



Sometimes it is difficult to get medical help because of how healthcare is organised. Sometimes, hospitals and doctors are hard to get to.

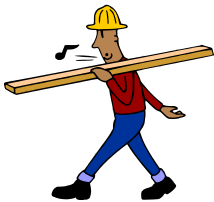


For example:

- the places are too far away
- someone needs to help
- it is difficult to enter the buildings if you have a disability
- the information is hard to understand
- the working hours in the hospital or at the doctors are not good.

The way people work and live can make it hard get medical help.

For example:



- People often work in jobs that they need to be strong for. This can make them sick. This work is harder when they get sick. This work is harder when they get older.
- Some people do not have time to be sick. If they do not work, they lose the job.
- Women often take care of all the family. They do not have time to be sick.



People with a disability living independently sometimes have better access to medical help than when they live with their family because the family does not listen to them properly.

People believe in different things  
or do things differently  
because of where they come from.

Women with different skin colours or  
who have a different religion  
may not go to the doctors  
because they are not treated as they would like.

For example, Muslim women  
do not like to be with doctors who are men.  
In many countries, doctors do not think about  
what Muslim women want and  
that Muslim women do not want to be with  
doctors who are men.



Muslim women sometimes  
stop going to the doctor because of that.

People with different skin colours  
might think differently about medicine  
and about doctors.

For example,  
all the family may come into hospital with the patient.  
The doctors do not always respect this.  
People who come from another country  
might believe in medicine from their countries.  
They can't find these medicines where they live now.

## Examples of discrimination and multiple discrimination

Some people wait for medical help longer than other.



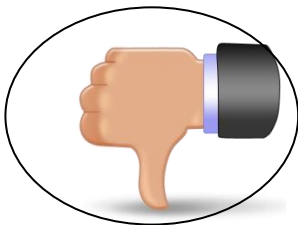
Some people think this is often because they have a disability or a different skin colour.

Sometimes people cannot get appropriate medical help because



- they come from a different country and they do not have the right papers
- they have a different skin colour
- they have a disability.

Sometimes doctors and nurses do not treat patients nicely or do not take them seriously if they have a different skin colour or if they have a disability or if they come from a different country or if they are old.



Sometimes doctors and nurses think patients who are old and come from another country are pretending to be sick to get money from the government.



The doctors and nurses are not always friendly to patients who look different or dress differently.

For example, women who are Muslim.



Sometimes doctors and nurses give medical help which is not very good to people who are different.



The law says everyone should have a choice.

People who are different often find it hard to make their choice about medical help.

Sometimes doctors and nurses

do not explain to them the medical help they can get.

Sometimes there is no information about the medical help or the information is hard to understand.

Sometimes doctors and nurses

behave badly

to women with a disability.

Sometimes they say things

which they should not say.

For example, they ask about the patient's sex life.

Sometimes doctors might ignore the health problems of a person with a disability.



They think the problems are part of the disability

Sometimes they do things

which they should not do.

For example, a doctor might ask

the person who supports the person with a disability

what medical help is needed.

They might not ask the person with a disability.

For example, sometimes doctors do things

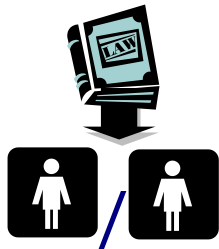
to the bodies of women with disabilities

so these women cannot have babies

without asking the women.

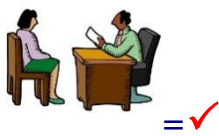
## Problems in getting help

There are lots of laws to protect your rights.  
These laws try to stop discrimination.



Most laws look at one type of discrimination.  
For example, the law looks at discrimination  
that happens to women.

It says that women must be treated the same as men.



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Laws also look at discrimination in something specific like  
getting a job,  
or getting medical help.

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Some types of discrimination are protected better  
than other types of discrimination.

Getting a job is better protected  
than getting medical help.

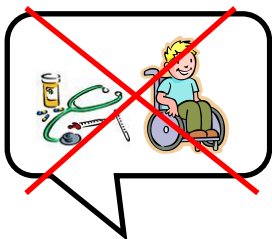


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This makes it hard to go to court  
to stop discrimination that happens to people  
who are different in more than 1 way  
when getting medical help.

It is hard for the courts to protect someone  
who has a disability and a different skin colour  
and is looking for medical help.

This is because when looking for medical help  
skin colour is protected by European law  
but disability is not protected.





Many people do not know who to complain to about discrimination.

Many people do not know where to go to complain.



There are different places to go to complain.

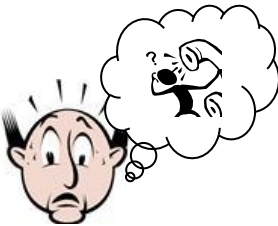
You can go to one place to complain about discrimination.

You can go to another place to complain about bad doctors and nurses.

This makes it difficult to complain.



Many people believe that complaining will not change anything.



Many people are scared that complaining will make it harder to get medical help in the future.

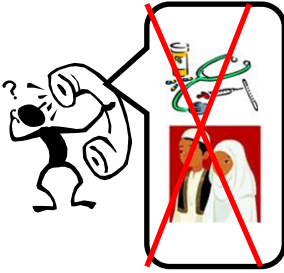


Many people say there is not much help to make it easier to complain.

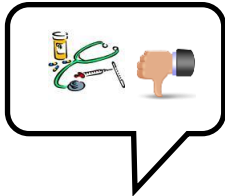
The information is hard to understand because the words are hard to understand or because it is not in their language.

For some people, the people that help them in the daily lives do not help them to complain.





When someone does complain,  
it is hard to show that there has been discrimination.



Lawyers usually try to go to court  
speaking about bad doctors  
instead of discrimination.



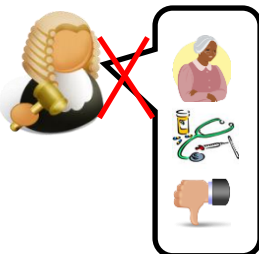
This is easier for them to speak about.  
This is easier for them to win in court.  
This gives them more money if they win.

But then discrimination is not shown and  
nothing is done about discrimination.

It is even harder  
to show different types of discrimination together.  
Different types of discrimination together  
is called multiple discrimination.

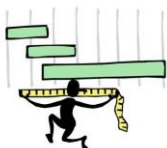


Judges and lawyers do not know  
about multiple discrimination.



This means lawyers do not speak  
about multiple discrimination.  
It is hard to win in court  
speaking about multiple discrimination.

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This means no one knows  
how much multiple discrimination there is.

## What next?



There should be laws to give the same protection for all types of discrimination.

When there is discrimination in healthcare courts should pay victims of discrimination enough.

Everybody should be treated the same when they need help for their health.

This includes making sure that everyone can understand information about health.



Different people have different needs.

Different people believe in different things.

Doctors and nurses need to understand this and take it into account when providing healthcare.



Countries should collect more information about who visits hospitals and healthcare centres.

For example, they should find out information about the health situation and problems of people with disabilities and with different skin colours.

This will help them learn about problems in healthcare.

If people have problems with their doctors and nurses they need to be told:



- what to do
- how to complain
- and where to go.

This will help them complain to the right bodies.

This book was developed thanks to the support of Inclusion Europe and Soufiane el Amrani.