

Review articles

# Ableism and social inclusion of people with disabilities: An integrative review

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** to synthesize the literature on the influence of ableism on the social inclusion of people presented with disabilities.

**Methods:** this qualitative integrative review employed the acronym SPIDER to develop the central question. The articles were searched across seven information sources, utilizing a search strategy that incorporated descriptors and their respective synonyms. The articles located were entered into the Rayyan application, initially analyzing them by excluding duplicates and reading titles and abstracts. The ones selected were read in full. Following the inclusion criteria, 17 articles were defined and remained in the review. The results were analyzed qualitatively.

**Literature Review:** ableism is a form of oppression, preventing people from participating in society and exercising their rights. Functioning must be emphasized in contrast to capacity, and the identity of people with disabilities must be valued by using appropriate language and attitudes, without stereotypes.

**Conclusion:** ableist conceptions and attitudes cause distancing, segregation, and exclusion of people with disabilities, making it difficult to include them effectively in society.

**Keywords:** Disability Discrimination; Persons with Disabilities; Social Inclusion



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## INTRODUCTION

People with disabilities (PWDs) have been historically considered defective and referred to as mentally and/or physically disabled, worldwide. They have been part of a history of segregation involving practices and laws aimed at restricting people with genetic characteristics considered inadequate. Some people with psychosocial, cognitive, or intellectual disabilities were institutionalized and considered “mentally weak” and threatening, demonstrating the violence, oppression, and exclusion faced by this population<sup>1</sup>.

Similar to other countries, Brazilian PWDs are still victims of prejudice and social discrimination. The concepts attributed to this population refer to illness, inferiority, and incapacity<sup>2</sup>.

PWDs are understood as having some physical limitation that, combined with socio-environmental barriers, results in limited social participation<sup>3,4</sup>. Disability classifications encompass medium or long-term impairment in physical, sensory (visual, auditory), intellectual, or multiple areas. As part of human diversity, each person with disabilities has their particularities and ways of dealing with their condition<sup>5</sup>.

Disabled bodies in biomedical discourse present deviations from their organic integrity and the functional biological norm. However, this body must be understood through its individual and social functioning in activities of daily living, interpersonal relationships, and work<sup>3,6</sup>.

Religious, biomedical, and other different views on disability impose barriers and limit a person's autonomy, considering them deviant from the norms imposed on social interactions. This reveals ableism, a sociocultural process that discriminates against PWDs, considering them incapable of carrying out activities that involve learning and self-sufficiency<sup>7-9</sup>.

The concept of ableism is broader and constructed with reference to a “set of beliefs regarding a standardized and authoritarian understanding of the human body, delimited by conceptual and aesthetic standards regarding the concept of health”<sup>10</sup>. Thus,

deviant or different bodies are associated with limitations and considered less capable<sup>11,12</sup>.

Ableist discourses and attitudes, often perceived in subliminal and veiled situations, make PWDs vulnerable when attempts are made to minimize their disability, exclude them from social coexistence, or treat them differently and unequally compared to a certain group or category of people to which they do not belong<sup>13</sup>. Expectations regarding PWDs are related to a condition of disadvantage and lack of social protagonism<sup>11,12</sup>.

Thus, this population faces evident health, educational, occupational, and cultural problems, which, from a social perspective, generate a series of doubts and questions about those who do not conform to the standards. Views and attitudes about PWDs must be problematized, pondered, and reviewed so that we can truly include them and have them participate in society<sup>4</sup>.

Socially including people on equal terms must promote the possibilities of emancipation, self-sufficiency, and social participation of minorities, including PWDs<sup>6</sup>.

The social inclusion of PWDs is a greatly important process under construction, whereas ableism is still present today, requiring an updated review of the literature on the topic. Hence, this study aimed to synthesize the literature on the influence of ableism on the social inclusion of PWDs.

## METHODS

This study is a qualitative integrative review, whose method<sup>14</sup> has the following six research development stages: 1<sup>st</sup>: identifying the theme and defining the research question; 2<sup>nd</sup>: establishing the inclusion and exclusion criteria; 3<sup>rd</sup>: identifying pre-selected and selected studies; 4<sup>th</sup>: categorizing selected studies; 5<sup>th</sup>: analyzing and interpreting the results; and 6<sup>th</sup>: presenting the review/synthesis of knowledge.

All stages in this research took place between May 2023 and April 2024 and are based on a problem question on ableism.

The research problem question was based on the acronym SPIDER <sup>15</sup>: S (sample), PI (phenomenon of interest), D (design), E (evaluation), and R (research type) (Chart 1), prioritizing the context and phenomenon

of interest of the research. This acronym is related to the eligibility criteria, assisting in the guidelines, and directing the article writing.

**Chart 1.** Elements of the research question and eligibility criteria according to the SPIDER acronym

Abbreviation	Element	Description
S	Sample	People with disabilities or their guardians/caregivers
PI	Phenomenon of Interest	Ableism
D	Design	Observational studies, case/experience reports
E	Evaluation	Influence of ableism on the social inclusion of people with disabilities
R	Research Type	Qualitative studies

Source: The authors.

The central question was defined as, “What is the influence of ableism on the social inclusion of PWDs?”. The integrative review aims to answer its question and identify, select, and analyze relevant research, synthesizing information that can help change personal and professional practices of those who live or work with PWDs, enabling new investigations and filling knowledge gaps on the topic.

A search strategy was developed to search for

articles, using a block of descriptors and their synonyms from the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH).

The research was conducted using the following information sources: PubMed, PubMed PMC, BVS, Scopus, Web of Science, PsycInfo, and EMBASE, without language restrictions or publication date limits. The search terms and Boolean operators used per database are shown in Chart 2.

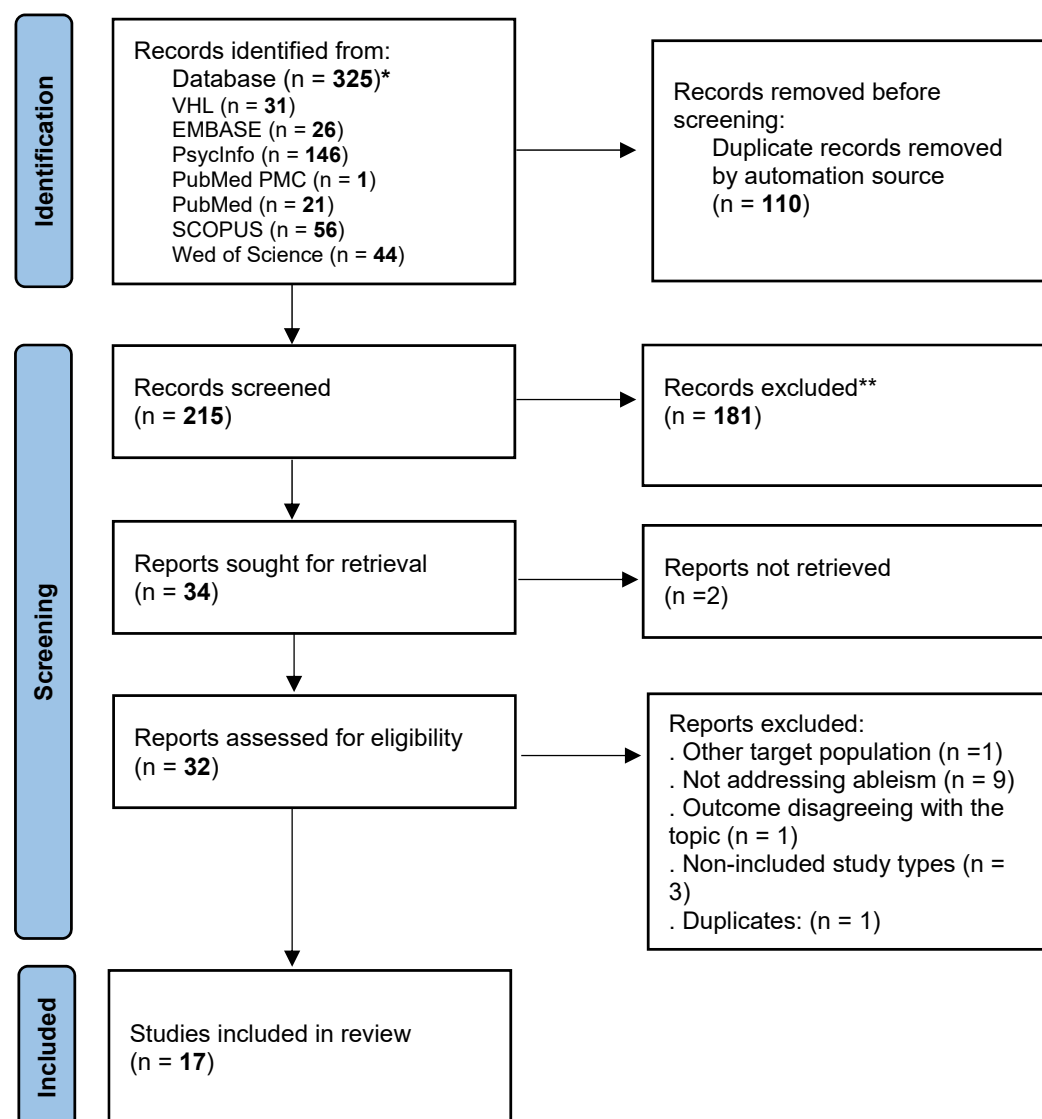
**Chart 2.** Information sources, search strategies, and number of articles found, 2023

Source	Strategy	Number of articles
<b>PUBMED</b>	(((Social Discrimination[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Social Discrimination"[Title/Abstract] OR "Discrimination, Social"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disability Discrimination"[Title/Abstract] OR "Discrimination, Disability"[Title/Abstract] OR Ableism[Title/Abstract] OR "Housing Discrimination"[Title/Abstract] OR "Discrimination, Housing"[Title/Abstract] OR "Housing Discriminations"[Title/Abstract])) OR ((Prejudice[MeSH Terms]) OR (Prejudice[Title/Abstract] OR Prejudices[Title/Abstract]))) AND (((Disabled Persons[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Disabled Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR Handicapped[Title/Abstract] OR "People with Disabilities"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabilities, People with"[Title/Abstract] OR "People with Disability"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons with Disabilities"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabilities, Persons with"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disability, Persons with"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons with Disability"[Title/Abstract] OR "Physically Handicapped"[Title/Abstract] OR "Handicapped, Physically"[Title/Abstract] OR "Physically Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled, Physically"[Title/Abstract] OR "Physically Challenged"[Title/Abstract])) OR ((Persons with Mental Disabilities[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Persons with Mental Disabilities"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled, Mentally"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Handicapped"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons with Intellectual Disability"[Title/Abstract] OR "Intellectually Disabled Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled Persons, Intellectually"[Title/Abstract] OR "Intellectually Disabled Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Intellectually Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Disabled Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Disabled Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Mentally Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Mentally Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Retarded"[Title/Abstract]))) OR ((Persons With Hearing Impairments[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Persons With Hearing Impairments"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hearing Impaired Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hearing Impaired Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Hearing Impaired"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Hearing Impaired"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hearing Disabled Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled Persons, Hearing"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hearing Disabled Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Hearing Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Hearing Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Deaf Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Deaf Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Deaf"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Deaf"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hard of Hearing Persons"[Title/Abstract])) OR ((Visually Impaired Persons[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Visually Impaired Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Impaired Person, Visually"[Title/Abstract] OR "Impaired Persons, Visually"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Visually Impaired"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Visually Impaired"[Title/Abstract] OR "Visually Impaired Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Blind Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Blind Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Blind"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Blind"[Title/Abstract]))) AND ((Social Inclusion[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Social Inclusion"[Title/Abstract] OR "Inclusion, Social"[Title/Abstract]))	21
<b>PUBMED PMC</b>	(((Social Discrimination[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Social Discrimination"[Title/Abstract] OR "Discrimination, Social"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disability Discrimination"[Title/Abstract] OR "Discrimination, Disability"[Title/Abstract] OR Ableism[Title/Abstract] OR "Housing Discrimination"[Title/Abstract] OR "Discrimination, Housing"[Title/Abstract] OR "Housing Discriminations"[Title/Abstract])) OR ((Prejudice[MeSH Terms]) OR (Prejudice[Title/Abstract] OR Prejudices[Title/Abstract]))) AND (((Disabled Persons[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Disabled Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR Handicapped[Title/Abstract] OR "People with Disabilities"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabilities, People with"[Title/Abstract] OR "People with Disability"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons with Disabilities"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabilities, Persons with"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disability, Persons with"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons with Disability"[Title/Abstract] OR "Physically Handicapped"[Title/Abstract] OR "Handicapped, Physically"[Title/Abstract] OR "Physically Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled, Physically"[Title/Abstract] OR "Physically Challenged"[Title/Abstract])) OR ((Persons with Mental Disabilities[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Persons with Mental Disabilities"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled, Mentally"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Handicapped"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons with Intellectual Disability"[Title/Abstract] OR "Intellectually Disabled Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled Persons, Intellectually"[Title/Abstract] OR "Intellectually Disabled Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Intellectually Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Disabled Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Disabled Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Mentally Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Mentally Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Mentally Retarded"[Title/Abstract]))) OR ((Persons With Hearing Impairments[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Persons With Hearing Impairments"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hearing Impaired Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hearing Impaired Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Hearing Impaired"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Hearing Impaired"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hearing Disabled Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Disabled Persons, Hearing"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hearing Disabled Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Hearing Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Hearing Disabled"[Title/Abstract] OR "Deaf Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Deaf Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Deaf"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Deaf"[Title/Abstract] OR "Hard of Hearing Persons"[Title/Abstract])) OR ((Visually Impaired Persons[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Visually Impaired Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Impaired Person, Visually"[Title/Abstract] OR "Impaired Persons, Visually"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Visually Impaired"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Visually Impaired"[Title/Abstract] OR "Visually Impaired Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Blind Persons"[Title/Abstract] OR "Blind Person"[Title/Abstract] OR "Person, Blind"[Title/Abstract] OR "Persons, Blind"[Title/Abstract]))) AND ((Social Inclusion[MeSH Terms]) OR ("Social Inclusion"[Title/Abstract] OR "Inclusion, Social"[Title/Abstract]))	01
<b>BVS / BIREME MEDLINE (21) LILACS (8) Index Psi Periódicos (4)</b>	((("Social Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Social" OR "Disability Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Disability" OR ableism OR "Housing Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Housing" OR "Housing Discriminations") OR (prejudice OR prejudices)) AND ((("Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Person" OR "Person, Disabled" OR "Persons, Disabled" OR handicapped OR "People with Disabilities" OR "Disabilities, People with" OR "People with Disability" OR "Persons with Disabilities" OR "Disabilities, Persons with" OR "Disability, Persons with" OR "Persons with Disability" OR "Physically Handicapped" OR "Handicapped, Physically" OR "Physically Disabled" OR "Disabled, Physically" OR "Physically Challenged") OR ("Persons with Mental Disabilities" OR "Mentally Disabled" OR "Disabled, Mentally" OR "Mentally Handicapped" OR "Persons with Intellectual Disability" OR "Intellectually Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Persons, Intellectually" OR "Intellectually Disabled Person" OR "Persons, Intellectually Disabled" OR "Mentally Disabled Persons" OR "Mentally Disabled Person" OR "Person, Mentally Disabled" OR "Persons, Mentally Disabled" OR "Mentally Retarded") OR ("Persons With Hearing Impairments" OR "Hearing Impaired Persons" OR "Hearing Impaired Person" OR "Person, Hearing Impaired" OR "Persons, Hearing Impaired" OR "Hearing Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Persons, Hearing" OR "Hearing Disabled Person" OR "Person, Hearing Disabled" OR "Persons, Hearing Disabled" OR "Deaf Persons" OR "Deaf Person" OR "Person, Deaf" OR "Persons, Deaf" OR "Hard of Hearing Persons" OR "Visually Impaired Persons" OR "Impaired Person, Visually" OR "Impaired Persons, Visually" OR "Person, Visually Impaired" OR "Persons, Visually Impaired" OR "Visually Impaired Person" OR "Blind Persons" OR "Blind Person" OR "Person, Blind" OR "Persons, Blind")) AND ((("Social Inclusion" OR "Inclusion, Social"))	31

Source	Strategy	Number of articles
SCOPUS	(( ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Social Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Social" OR "Disability Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Disability" OR ableism OR "Housing Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Housing" OR "Housing Discriminations" ) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ( prejudice OR prejudices ) ) ) AND ( ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Person" OR "Person, Disabled" OR "Persons, Disabled" OR handicapped OR "People with Disabilities" OR "Disabilities, People with" OR "People with Disability" OR "Persons with Disabilities" OR "Disabilities, Persons with" OR "Disability, Persons with" OR "Persons with Disability" OR "Physically Handicapped" OR "Handicapped, Physically" OR "Physically Disabled" OR "Disabled, Physically" OR "Physically Challenged" ) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Persons with Mental Disabilities" OR "Mentally Disabled" OR "Disabled, Mentally" OR "Mentally Handicapped" OR "Persons with Intellectual Disability" OR "Intellectually Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Persons, Intellectually" OR "Intellectually Disabled Person" OR "Persons, Intellectually Disabled" OR "Mentally Disabled Persons" OR "Mentally Disabled Person" OR "Person, Mentally Disabled" OR "Persons, Mentally Disabled" OR "Mentally Retarded" ) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Persons With Hearing Impairments" OR "Hearing Impaired Persons" OR "Hearing Impaired Person" OR "Person, Hearing Impaired" OR "Persons, Hearing Impaired" OR "Hearing Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Persons, Hearing" OR "Hearing Disabled Person" OR "Person, Hearing Disabled" OR "Persons, Hearing Disabled" OR "Deaf Persons" OR "Deaf Person" OR "Person, Deaf" OR "Persons, Deaf" OR "Hard of Hearing Persons" ) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Visually Impaired Persons" OR "Impaired Person, Visually" OR "Impaired Persons, Visually" OR "Person, Visually Impaired" OR "Persons, Visually Impaired" OR "Blind Persons" OR "Blind Person" OR "Person, Blind" OR "Persons, Blind" ) ) ) ) AND ( TITLE-ABS-KEY ( "Social Inclusion" OR "Inclusion, Social" ) ) )	56
WEB OF SCIENCE	"Social Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Social" OR "Disability Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Disability" OR Ableism OR "Housing Discrimination" OR "Discrimination, Housing" OR "Housing Discriminations" (Topic) or Prejudice OR Prejudices (Topic) and Preprint Citation Index (Exclude – Database) AND "Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Person" OR "Person, Disabled" OR "Persons, Disabled" OR "Handicapped" OR "People with Disabilities" OR "Disabilities, People with" OR "People with Disability" OR "Persons with Disabilities" OR "Disabilities, Persons with" OR "Disability, Persons with" OR "Persons with Disability" OR "Physically Handicapped" OR "Handicapped, Physically" OR "Physically Disabled" OR "Disabled, Physically" OR "Physically Challenged" (Topic) or "Persons with Mental Disabilities" OR "Mentally Disabled" OR "Disabled, Mentally" OR "Mentally Handicapped" OR "Persons with Intellectual Disability" OR "Intellectually Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Persons, Intellectually" OR "Intellectually Disabled Person" OR "Persons, Intellectually Disabled" OR "Mentally Disabled Persons" OR "Mentally Disabled Person" OR "Person, Mentally Disabled" OR "Persons, Mentally Disabled" OR "Mentally Retarded" (Topic) or "Persons With Hearing Impairments" OR "Hearing Impaired Persons" OR "Hearing Impaired Person" OR "Person, Hearing Impaired" OR "Persons, Hearing Impaired" OR "Hearing Disabled Persons" OR "Disabled Persons, Hearing" OR "Hearing Disabled Person" OR "Person, Hearing Disabled" OR "Persons, Hearing Disabled" OR "Deaf Persons" OR "Deaf Person" OR "Person, Deaf" OR "Persons, Deaf" OR "Hard of Hearing Persons" (Topic) or "Visually Impaired Persons" OR "Impaired Person, Visually" OR "Impaired Persons, Visually" OR "Person, Visually Impaired" OR "Persons, Visually Impaired" OR "Visually Impaired Person" OR "Blind Persons" OR "Blind Person" OR "Person, Blind" OR "Persons, Blind" (Topic) and Preprint Citation Index (Exclude – Database) AND "Social Inclusion" OR "Inclusion, Social" (Topic) and Preprint Citation Index (Exclude – Database) PERMANENT LINK: <a href="https://www.webofscience.com/wos/alldb/summary/a979abd6-2b43-47f0-994a-fbb1e7b2574c-914e8ce3/relevance/1">https://www.webofscience.com/wos/alldb/summary/a979abd6-2b43-47f0-994a-fbb1e7b2574c-914e8ce3/relevance/1</a>	44
EMBASE	('social discrimination'/syn OR 'prejudice'/syn) AND ('disabled person'/syn OR 'mentally disabled person'/syn OR 'hearing impaired person'/syn OR 'visually impaired person'/syn) AND 'social inclusion'/syn	26
PSYCINFO	((((IndexTermsFilt: ("Social Discrimination")))) OR ((Any Field: ("Social Discrimination")) OR (Any Field: ("Discrimination, Social")) OR (Any Field: ("Disability Discrimination")) OR (Any Field: ("Discrimination, Disability")) OR (Any Field: (Ableism)) OR (Any Field: ("Housing Discrimination")) OR (Any Field: ("Discrimination, Housing")) OR (Any Field: ("Housing Discriminations")))) OR (((Any Field: (Prejudice)) OR (Any Field: (Prejudices)))) AND ((Any Field: ("Disabled Persons") OR Any Field: ("Disabled Person") OR Any Field: ("Person, Disabled") OR Any Field: ("Persons, Disabled") OR Any Field: (Handicapped) OR Any Field: ("People with Disabilities") OR Any Field: ("Disabilities, People with") OR Any Field: ("People with Disability") OR Any Field: ("Persons with Disabilities") OR Any Field: ("Disabilities, Persons with") OR Any Field: ("Disability, Persons with") OR Any Field: ("Persons with Disability") OR Any Field: ("Physically Handicapped") OR Any Field: ("Handicapped, Physically") OR Any Field: ("Physically Disabled") OR Any Field: ("Disabled, Physically") OR Any Field: ("Physically Challenged")) OR (Any Field: ("Persons with Mental Disabilities") OR Any Field: ("Mentally Disabled") OR Any Field: ("Disabled, Mentally") OR Any Field: ("Mentally Handicapped") OR Any Field: ("Persons with Intellectual Disability") OR Any Field: ("Intellectually Disabled Persons") OR Any Field: ("Disabled Persons, Intellectually") OR Any Field: ("Intellectually Disabled Person") OR Any Field: ("Persons, Intellectually Disabled") OR Any Field: ("Mentally Disabled Persons") OR Any Field: ("Mentally Disabled Person") OR Any Field: ("Person, Mentally Disabled") OR Any Field: ("Persons, Mentally Disabled") OR Any Field: ("Mentally Retarded")) OR (Any Field: ("Persons With Hearing Impairments") OR Any Field: ("Hearing Impaired Persons") OR Any Field: ("Hearing Impaired Person") OR Any Field: ("Person, Hearing Impaired") OR Any Field: ("Persons, Hearing Impaired") OR Any Field: ("Hearing Disabled Persons") OR Any Field: ("Disabled Persons, Hearing") OR Any Field: ("Hearing Disabled Person") OR Any Field: ("Person, Hearing Disabled") OR Any Field: ("Persons, Hearing Disabled") OR Any Field: ("Deaf Persons") OR Any Field: ("Deaf Person") OR Any Field: ("Person, Deaf") OR Any Field: ("Persons, Deaf") OR Any Field: ("Hard of Hearing Persons")) OR (Any Field: ("Visually Impaired Persons") OR Any Field: ("Impaired Person, Visually") OR Any Field: ("Impaired Persons, Visually") OR Any Field: ("Person, Visually Impaired") OR Any Field: ("Persons, Visually Impaired") OR Any Field: ("Visually Impaired Person") OR Any Field: ("Blind Persons") OR Any Field: ("Blind Person") OR Any Field: ("Person, Blind") OR Any Field: ("Persons, Blind")))) AND ((IndexTermsFilt: ("Social Discrimination") OR IndexTermsFilt: ("Social Inclusion")) OR (Any Field: ("Social Inclusion") OR Any Field: ("Inclusion, Social"))) PERMANENT LINK: <a href="https://psycnet.apa.org/permalink/6fd50cba-5c47-9407-bfea-697f08b9f0fd">https://psycnet.apa.org/permalink/6fd50cba-5c47-9407-bfea-697f08b9f0fd</a>	146
TOTAL		325

Source: The authors

The steps for locating and selecting research articles are presented in the PRISMA flowchart<sup>16</sup> (Figure 1).



\*Total number of records identified in information sources.

Source: The authors. Adapted from: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD et al. The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*. 2021;372:n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>

**Figure 1.** Flowchart of the process of article identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion in the integrative review

After locating the articles, they were inserted into the Rayyan application, which is used to aid in synthesizing reviews<sup>17</sup>. It helped the authors identify duplicates and read the titles and abstracts blinded and independently, classifying the articles according to inclusion and exclusion criteria. The researchers diverged in this article selection stage, which was resolved with the help of a third reviewer in the final decision to include or exclude them. After reading the eligible articles in

full, they reached a consensus on the ones that finally remained for the integrative review.

The article inclusion criteria were texts whose target population was people with physical, auditory, visual, intellectual, or multiple disabilities<sup>18</sup> and that addressed ableism, experiences, and/or reports about the social inclusion of PWDs.

The review excluded articles with a target population other than PWDs, that did not address ableism, and whose outcomes disagreed with the proposed



topic. It also excluded studies classified as abstracts published in proceedings, editorials, reflective articles, documentary analyses, literature reviews, technical manuals, chapters, books, monographs, and dissertations.

The quality analysis of the final studies was based on the Joanna Briggs Institute's checklist for qualitative research: A Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research<sup>19</sup>. Ten criteria were used to evaluate the articles according to the evaluation instrument. The articles were classified according to the percentage of "yes" answers: 70% or more of "yes" answers is

considered low risk of bias, between 50% and 69% of "yes" answers is considered moderate risk, and up to 49% of "yes" answers is considered high risk.

An author and a co-author assessed the responses about article biases independently, following the checklist<sup>19</sup>, and a third co-author contributed to the final analysis of the responses and the validation of the scores. The analysis of response data aimed to minimize possible interpretation bias on the part of the researchers of this review.

The assessment of the methodological quality of the articles included in the review is shown in Chart 3.

**Chart 3.** Assessment of the methodological quality of the articles included in the review according to the checklist criteria<sup>19</sup>

Articles	Assessment criteria checklist										Risk of bias (%) <sup>a</sup>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Barros LOB, Ambiel RAM, 2020 <sup>20</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	UC	N	Y	Y	Y	Low
Singh S, Khan AM, et al, 2022 <sup>21</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Low
Cech EA. 2023 <sup>22</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Low
Lynch S, Hill J, 2021 <sup>23</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Low
Cooney G, Jahoda A et al, 2006 <sup>24</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Low
Garcia-Liste N, Fernandez-Lasa U, 2022 <sup>25</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	UC	N	Y	Y	Y	Low
Ma GYK, 2022 <sup>26</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Low
Johnson BJ, 2020 <sup>27</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Low
Moreira MCN, Mendes CHF et al, 2022 <sup>28</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Low
González CC, Lagos CD et al, 2018 <sup>30</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Low
Lindsay S, Mcpherson AC, 2012 <sup>32</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Low
Dalal AK, 2006 <sup>33</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Low
Bogart KR, Dunn DS, 2019 <sup>35</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Moderate
Kwon Ck, 2021 <sup>36</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Low
Cox NC, Hill AP, 2018 <sup>37</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Low
Gappmayer G, 2021 <sup>38</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Low
Hall AS, 2009 <sup>39</sup>	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Low

Captions: Y = Yes, N = No, UC = Unclear, NA = Not applicable, <sup>a</sup> = Classification according to the percentage of affirmative answers.

Source: The authors.

The checklist criteria evaluation marked some articles as "unclear". For criterion 6, it was considered that the authors of two articles cited cultural and theoretical aspects of the topic, but did not clearly state the theoretical line used to develop the research.

The final synthesis of the 17 articles considered 16 with a low risk of bias and one with a moderate risk of bias. No article had a high risk of bias.

The article considered in the bias analysis as having

moderate risk was included in this research because it presents content of interest to the study, without affecting the validity of the studies for the literature review, as it contains experiences, narratives, and data that contribute to the objective of this review.

After analyzing the articles, a table was created with their main characteristics: authors, year of publication, objective, sample/target population, results, and conclusions (Chart 4).

All articles selected and included in this integrative review had a qualitative methodological approach. However, their heterogeneous designs hindered the generalization of the results and were a limiting factor of

this review. Despite the methodological and contextual differences between the articles, they were analyzed using common data according to the identified thematic categories, without affecting the results of this review.

**Chart 4.** Synthesis of the main characteristics of the articles included in the integrative review (n = 17)

Authors, year of publication	Objective	Sample/target population	Results	Conclusion
Barros LOB, Ambiel RAM, 2020 <sup>20</sup>	To verify the perception of occupational inclusion of people with visual impairments	136 visually impaired people	The reasons for personal dissatisfaction among people with visual impairments were related to organizational conflicts and a lack of accessibility. Prejudice and social ignorance were identified as barriers to inclusion.	Inclusion has not yet been consolidated as an effective practice in accordance with legal principles. Environmental and attitudinal barriers are the biggest obstacles to including this population in the job market.
Singh S, Khan AM, Dhaliwal U, Singh N, 2022 <sup>21</sup>	To use tools from the humanities and health sciences to convey disability skills and help to appreciate social and human rights issues associated with disability.	149 medical students and facilitators with and without disabilities.	The tools used had the potential to help students understand struggle and oppression and expose discriminatory attitudes. Understanding the diversity, dignity, and autonomy of people with disabilities contributes to social inclusion, equity, and universal design.	Using tools and dialog by, for, and with people with disabilities should be part of such interventions in developing and teaching courses.
Cech EA, 2023 <sup>22</sup>	To understand the personal experiences of engineers with disabilities in engineering classrooms and workplaces, compared to those of people without disabilities.	1,729 engineering students and 8,321 engineers, of whom 145 have disabilities	Students with disabilities are more likely to drop out of their engineering programs, and professionals with disabilities are more likely to consider leaving their engineering jobs compared to their peers, due to the greater risks of encountering interpersonal bias.	There is a need for further study and attention to the social, cultural, and physical barriers that block people with disabilities from full and equal participation in engineering.
Lynch S, Hill J, 2021 <sup>23</sup>	To report how athletes with disabilities transgressed gender norms in university spaces and stood as athletic and disabled bodies in these spaces.	2 wheelchair athletes playing elite tennis.	The results of analyzing categories of identity of people with disabilities demonstrate that, depending on the space, the disabled body feels marginalized and different, but it becomes valued and strong when it feels included.	The institutional structures of universities dictate the aesthetics of beauty and the physical spaces of exclusion. Wheelchair athletes feel excluded based on capitalism and ableist ideologies.
Cooney G, Jahoda A, Gumley A, Knott F, 2006 <sup>24</sup>	To assess young people's school experience in comparison to segregated education and see how this affects them and their future aspirations.	60 young people with intellectual disabilities	Participants from mainstream and special schools reported similar experiences of stigmatized treatment beyond school.	The negative treatment reported by children was a serious source of concern. Schools must promote the emotional well-being of students with intellectual difficulties.
Garcia-Liste N, Fernandez-Lasa U, Usabiaga AO, 2022 <sup>25</sup>	Identify the meanings attributed to sports practice in different scenarios in athletes with and without cerebral palsy.	A person with cerebral palsy and the family and friends of the study case.	Athletes with CP face less discrimination when competing in inclusive groups in the specific sports context and psychomotor practices. Segregated sports practices are safe places and increase interpersonal relationships among all participants.	In inclusive contexts, specific or segregated sports can be an effective strategy to promote the inclusion of people with cerebral palsy. Sports practices can be a means of acquiring social identity and inclusion.
Ma GYK, 2022 <sup>26</sup>	To report manifestations of ableism in artistic and cultural activities.	A person in a wheelchair	Discriminatory access practices and inaccessible artistic and cultural activities have a detrimental impact on the organizational, intergroup, interpersonal, individual, and societal levels.	Choices and opportunities to participate in artistic and cultural activities for people with disabilities, such as wheelchair users, are still seriously denied under the impact of ableism.
Johnson BJ, 2020 <sup>27</sup>	To address a family's experience in living with a young child with Down syndrome.	The parents of a child with Down syndrome	People in everyday life and places produce ableist discourses and attitudes about disability through their attitudes, actions, and expectations, disrupting regular family life by imposing oppressive modes of subjectivity on children with intellectual disabilities and their parents-caregivers.	Places shape our experience of everyday life and our sense of identity. They permeate social contexts, which generate experiences of inclusion or exclusion for people who attend these places. There is important everyday political work to be done, and parents-caregivers play an important role in this work.
Moreira MCN, Mendes CHF, Nascimento MAF et. al, 2022 <sup>28</sup>	To explore stigmas surrounding interactions with children born with congenital Zika syndrome	59 mothers and other caregivers of children with congenital Zika syndrome	Children with disabilities convey an image of protection, which is, however, associated with inferiority. Short- and long-term consequences include socially unjustified neglect and isolation of children with disabilities.	Public policies, especially social policies (health, education, and social assistance), are essential to produce compensatory mechanisms, recognition, and social inclusion of these children and their families.



Authors, year of publication	Objective	Sample/target population	Results	Conclusion
González CC, Lagos CD, Zapata CF, 2018 <sup>30</sup>	To identify and analyze the key elements for equal opportunities for a group of people with disabilities.	30 local residents and people related to the world of disabilities.	Most participants report discrimination in public services, in everyday dealings, and in the lack of opportunities for equal conditions.	It is necessary to consider the heterogeneous situations grouped under disability, reinforcing the importance of having local public policies for inclusion and guidelines for their development.
Lindsay S, Mcpherson AC, 2012 <sup>32</sup>	To explore suggestions for improving the inclusion of people with disabilities	15 children with cerebral palsy	Strategies to help improve social inclusion in schools include publicizing their condition, raising awareness of disability, raising awareness of bullying, developing a peer support network, and building self-confidence.	Children's suggestions to improve social inclusion and participation of children with disabilities should be considered in the classroom.
Dalal AK, 2006 <sup>33</sup>	Tor review research on attitudes toward disability and discuss one such community-based attitude.	350 children and adults with physical disabilities	During the community intervention program, a greater number of people with disabilities from the region sought access to hospitals and rehabilitation centers in a nearby city.	Some indicators of the effectiveness of this program include changes in attitude and awareness, increased visibility, and participation of people with disabilities in community activities.
Bogart KR, Dunn DS, 2019 <sup>35</sup>	To discuss the problem of ableism in its concept, in language, in literature, in psychology, in politics, in the present day.	Authors with and without disabilities from the Journal of Social Issues	The language surrounding ableism plays an important role in guiding expectations and inferences about people with disabilities, who have disturbing experiences with disability, resulting in health problems and interfering with well-being.	Allies are needed to advocate alongside disabled activists for civil rights. Interventions in inclusive schools and workplaces can leverage resources and peer intervention to reduce ableist public views.
Kwon Ck, 2021 <sup>36</sup>	To examine the discursive practices of employees with disabilities in organizations.	Seven employees with disabilities.	Participants countered negative stereotypes associated with them and resisted ableism by openly communicating the scope of their ability.	This study expands knowledge about the identity of people with disabilities in organizations and highlights the context in which the work of people with disabilities can be observed and theorized.
Cox NC, Hill AP, 2018 <sup>37</sup>	To examine the commitment to perfectionism in attitudes towards people with disabilities.	188 university students	Results revealed that socially prescribed perfectionism positively predicted negative feelings, interpersonal stress, and distancing behavior toward people with disabilities.	Perfectionism is related to difficulties in interacting with others in general, as well as projecting socially prescribed standards and beliefs onto others when measuring attitudes indirectly.
Gappmayer G, 2021 <sup>38</sup>	To understand occupations through capabilities and exclusionary behavior towards people with disabilities	A person with intellectual disability	The study reveals a connection between social norms and normative perspectives on occupations and the social value of people.	It is not enough to demand more social inclusion for people with disabilities; the objective should be to investigate how occupations could be carried out so as to deconstruct normality and support and value deviation.
Hall AS, 2009 <sup>39</sup>	To describe the social inclusion of young adults with intellectual disabilities and identify contexts of their social inclusion	14 adults with intellectual disabilities	Social inclusion consists of involvement in occupational, volunteer, social, recreational, and leisure activities, relationships, belonging, acceptance, and self-determination.	Experiences including housing, transportation, personal skills and abilities, financial resources, and assistance from family members and service providers influenced social inclusion.

Three thematic categories were identified in the results of the articles for the literature review, namely:

- Manifestations of ableism in different social settings.
- Difficulties and proposals for the inclusion of PWD.
- Anti-ableist thinking and actions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Manifestations of ableism in different social settings

The articles analyzed report limiting beliefs about PWDs in different settings and situations, including the lack of accessibility for these people to attend educational, health, and cultural environments, the unequal everyday treatment at work, the lack of opportunities, and the inefficiency of meeting their priority needs.

In work environments, when analyzing the reasons for dissatisfaction and barriers to the employment of people with visual impairments, a study observed complaints regarding people's doubts about the skills of PWDs. As a result, it pointed out that physical and attitudinal barriers are also present in the workplace and add to the organizational conflicts that already exist<sup>20</sup>.

Environments that require extensive training and education in the workplace are at greater risk of encountering interpersonal bias. When compared to their peers, professionals with disabilities working in engineering have difficulty finding a job and are more likely to leave their jobs<sup>21,22</sup>.

At school, students with disabilities from elementary school to university face unequal education and

attitudes of segregation from others<sup>23</sup>. They are more likely to drop out of school due to social, cultural, and physical barriers that do not allow participation on equal terms with others<sup>21,22</sup>.

Students with intellectual disabilities in mainstream and special schools report similar experiences of stigmatized treatment. The children's reports were a source of concern regarding attitudes towards them<sup>24</sup>.

A study addressed the humanization of the concept of disability in a medical program through classroom teaching tools, including the participation of students with disabilities. The authors concluded that using pedagogical tools helped to understand these people's struggle and oppression and exposed discriminatory attitudes when dealing with diversity<sup>21</sup>.

Sports practices can be a means of acquiring a social identity and bring social, physical, and psychological benefits, fostering respect for differences and individual abilities. However, the results of a study show that due to ableist ideology, even elite tennis athletes in wheelchairs feel excluded, marginalized, and different in sports<sup>23</sup>. Another study with people with cerebral palsy concluded that in inclusive contexts, specific or segregated sports can be an efficient strategy for inclusion<sup>25</sup>.

Wheelchair users also suffer from discriminatory practices, being impacted by ableism. Artistic and cultural activities are inaccessible at the social and individual levels. Employees and event organizers still do not include accessibility when they create and plan these events<sup>26</sup>.

The earlier we understand that access to environments and places attended by PWDs influences attitudes towards them, the greater the chances of not committing discriminatory and exclusionary acts. The experiences of parents of children with disabilities show that daily life settings shape our sense of identity and generate experiences of inclusion or exclusion since they are in social contexts<sup>27</sup>. Hence, public policies are essential to produce compensatory mechanisms and to recognize and include these children<sup>28</sup>.

Ableist behaviors are forms of oppression that prevent people from participating in society and exercising their rights, freedom, communication, access to information, culture, art, movement, and so forth. Attitudinal barriers toward PWDs established in social settings are always unfavorable to them, as they involve ignorance, prejudice, and stereotypes<sup>26,29</sup>.

## Difficulties and proposals for the inclusion of PWD

Empathy and an understanding of diversity are necessary for inclusion. The literature presents elements that can favor or hinder inclusion, depending on how attitudes and barriers are understood when dealing with differences. People must understand PWDs' priority needs, heterogeneity, and plurality in political life, education, work, health, and cultural participation<sup>30</sup>.

Thinking that one's physical condition makes them less capable based on a pre-constructed perspective means neglecting them as a human being endowed with individuality, rights, limitations, and capabilities, which is natural for every human being, whether they are PWDs or not<sup>12</sup>.

When a person's natural ability to hear, see, walk, speak, and think does not meet society's expectations, the person is considered disabled and therefore incapable. However, it is possible to have a physical disability and walk, or an intellectual disability and think, and thus be integrated and included in society<sup>6</sup>.

The social inclusion of PWDs implies a movement in society towards changes and adaptations to include them in its systems. Likewise, PWDs must prepare to assume their roles in society. Both sides must seek solutions, address problems, and equalize opportunities<sup>31</sup>.

Strategies against ableism include greater publicity about disability and emphasis on abilities and communication between people to recognize and discuss situations of social exclusion<sup>32</sup>.

Community intervention programs can create attitude change and awareness about PWDs. Increased visibility and focus on well-being and participation in community activities indicate changes in public attitudes in favor of this population, improving access to health, rehabilitation, and other services<sup>33</sup>.

It is important to keep in mind that inclusion policies should be a set of actions that provide equal opportunities for access to social goods and services. Hence, one must not only include but also be part of and belong to a space, whether physical or social<sup>34</sup>.

## Anti-ableist thinking and actions

Some articles approach anti-ableist thinking and acting, including conceptions about functioning in contrast to capacity, the valorization of PWDs identity, the use of appropriate language without stereotypes, the non-agreement with the concept of inferiority, and the roles played by PWDs in society.

Ableism is still a term loaded with prejudice, arising from a lack of knowledge about the condition of people who have some type of disability<sup>2</sup>.

Ableist thinking implies misconceptions about PWDs' capacity and functioning and can generate disturbing experiences that lead to health problems and interfere with their well-being. Language regarding ableism should be used cautiously, as it implies inferences and creates expectations about PWDs<sup>35</sup>.

Participants in a study on the discursive practices of employees with disabilities in organizations emphasize that negative stereotypes associated with PWDs must be countered, and that resistance to ableism must demonstrate the scope of each person's capacity<sup>36</sup>.

Socially prescribed perfectionism has emphasized negative feelings and interpersonal stress, distancing people from PWDs<sup>37</sup>. Social norms and normative perspectives on PWDs must be deconstructed. Knowledge about PWDs' identity must increase; it is not enough to simply demand greater social inclusion since the goal should be to support deviations, considering the context of their experiences, capabilities, and skills in contrast to perfectionism and ableism<sup>38,39</sup>.

The production of knowledge and practices aimed at anti-ableism must consider intersectional contexts and PWDs' subjectivities, stories, struggles, and achievements to recognize, highlight, and apply social policies developed with and for PWDs<sup>1</sup>.

Regulated laws and legal documents have been issued after a long history of segregation to ensure the rights and inclusion of PWDs. However, these alone cannot exclude discrimination and ableist attitudes and talk regarding PWDs<sup>9</sup>.

Anti-ableist actions emphasize publicizing the condition and raising awareness about disability, which are efficient strategies to aid social and educational inclusion. An article proposes that developing a support network to prevent bullying and build self-confidence optimizes participation and inclusion<sup>32</sup>.

Actions have already been planned to include PWDs, such as complying with the Brazilian inclusion law, removing physical and attitudinal barriers, fighting ableism, investing in assistive technologies, and so on. These processes go hand in hand and occur in proportion to the political and societal commitment to reducing the disadvantages imposed on PWDs, but they do not exhaust the topic<sup>7</sup>. PWDs need allies to defend their rights<sup>35</sup>.

Some indicators in the articles demonstrate that creating attitudes of change and awareness, as well as

the ability of PWDs to deal with threats to their identities, maintain optimism about the future and increase PWDs' visibility and participation in community activities and access to health and rehabilitation services, work, education, and social spaces<sup>30,33,35</sup>.

This integrative literature review demonstrates that studies on PWD permeate various fields, such as education, health, work, public policies, and so on. Research promoting their social inclusion faces challenges in filling gaps regarding the lack of accessibility, addressing prejudice, discrimination, attitudinal barriers, lack of information, and the need for actions to fight ableism.

## CONCLUSION

Ableism negatively influences the social inclusion of PWDs, as it generates feelings of sadness, incomprehension, and indignation, distancing and segregating them from community life. Therefore, ableist attitudes exclude these people and block them from effectively participating in society.

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CSOC: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Project administration; Supervision; Visualization; Writing - Original draft; Writing - Review & editing.

IRM: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Project administration; Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing - Original draft; Writing - Review & editing.

APMO: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Project administration; Resources; Visualization; Writing - Review and editing.

FN: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Writing - Original draft; Writing - Review and editing.

#### Data sharing statement:

We, Claudia de Souza Ozores Caldas, Irani Rodrigues Maldonado, Fernanda Lopes Niaradi, and Ana Paula de Moraes e Oliveira, authors and co-authors of the article, "Effects of ableism on the social inclusion of people with disabilities: A systematic review", declare that the study's data listed below will be available for sharing with interested researchers:

a) Information sources used, search strategies with descriptors, and their respective pre-selected synonyms located in the MeSH and DeCS controlled vocabularies.

b) Research schedule and file with the articles selected for the final phase of the review.

c) File of references used to formulate the central research question and to organize the flowchart.

d) Summary chart with the main characteristics of the articles included in the systematic review.

We hereby declare that these files will be available only after the article has been published.

The files will be available for request and access for 36 months from the date of publication of the article.

The data will be made available to researchers only for scientific research purposes.

The data should be requested via the author's email: [clau.ozores@gmail.com](mailto:clau.ozores@gmail.com)