

into account factors like its long term effectiveness, cost effectiveness and side effects.

The author then moves on to the global challenge of HPV infection and explains how competing healthcare needs, poverty, poor healthcare services and cultural barriers are the biggest obstacles in the fight against HPV infections in developing countries. She refers to India, which, in spite of having 20% of the global load of cervical cancer, conducts only a few million Pap smears annually. She also cites clinical studies which predict a reduction of 70% to 80% in the cervical cancer burden with vaccination in developing countries where women carry the real burden of HPV infections. But the prediction will come true and maximum benefit from vaccination will happen only when the HPV vaccination programme reaches those women who unfortunately do not have access to even basic healthcare services, forget HPV vaccination. As she points out, in a country like India, people are bothered more about the vaccine's affordability and availability than whether to administer it to young people before their sexual debut. The book ends with the story of a woman from India whose life was saved by timely screening and with the hope that HPV

vaccination will increase awareness and will help women fight the disease. The tragedy is that Indian women do not even receive cervical cancer screening. In such a situation one can only wonder about the significance of HPV vaccination in India.

India has her own share of controversies linked to the HPV vaccine. Concerns have been raised about the vaccine's safety and cost-effectiveness as well as the significance of an expensive programme when people's basic healthcare needs are not met. Questions were also asked about a pilot vaccination programme in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat: the programme was conducted among vulnerable sections who may not have been able to give informed consent.

The book might be a disappointment for those looking for insights regarding the controversy surrounding HPV vaccine trials in India. India has a different set of concerns and issues than those being raised in the book. Nevertheless the book provides valuable technical knowledge which can help parents as well as doctors take a stand regarding HPV vaccination. Despite the technical nature of the book, it can serve as an excellent referral book for students and the general public.

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## FILM REVIEWS

### Special friendships

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***Inside I am dancing.* Working Title Films and Studio Canal, 2004. Director: Damien O'Donnell. English, 100 minutes.**

*Inside I am dancing* is a story of two friends. It just so happens that the two friends are "disabled", a politically incorrect expression at the best of times and an offensive label at others.

The film opens with "residents" of a special home at Carrigmore, Ireland (54 km from Dublin), watching television and performing their Sunday activities. This is an old fashioned house with a garden, much like a country home. We then see a van coming up the driveway. The doors of the van open to reveal another grilled door, behind which the face of a young man in soft focus stares out at the audience. He is hurt at the indignity of being in a vehicle which looks like it is meant for prisoners. The shot is also very symbolic as the "home" with its restrictions feels like a cage to the independence-loving Rory O Shea.

Rory is in his early twenties, but is dressed like a teenager. As he enters the building on a wheelchair, with spiked hair,

pierced nose and leather jacket, his first words to the people at the special home are: "So is it always this much fun here? Or is today somebody's birthday?" Rory O' Shea (James McAvoy) is quite a rebel. He meets the obedient Michael Connolly (Steven Robertson), son of a well known lawyer. Michael's father has disowned him after his first wife (Michael's mother) died and he has married again. Michael has cerebral palsy and has grown up in institutions, while Rory suffers from Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a condition which involves a weakening of muscles largely of the pelvis and legs but spreading to other parts of the body as well. Rory is the only one who can understand what Michael says without speech aids. Michael has always lived in institutions and cannot imagine a life outside Carrigmore - until Rory comes along. Rory has applied for the independent living fund thrice and been denied each time. Michael decides to apply for the grant and asks for Rory to be allowed to live outside as his interpreter, at no extra cost to the funding board.

The film, much like Rory O Shea, has an irreverent attitude towards institutions and disabilities. When Rory emerges from the van, the head of Carrigmore tells him "I hope you're at

home with us here at Carrigmore." Rory immediately asks if she would give him the front door key.

People are stripped of their individuality at the institution, under the pretext of preserving it. The caretaker refuses to gel Rory's hair - Michael gels it instead. The home has a fixed schedule with time slots for watching TV, painting, listening to music and so on, and Rory finds this very constraining. It is almost like being in a cage, where the only time you get out is when you die, and everyone at the home knows this.

It comes as little surprise that both the protagonists are in love with the same woman, Siobhan (Romola Garai), whom they meet in a club, while spending money collected for the Home. She, however, doesn't love either of them. Rory tells Michael that she doesn't love him back because he is disabled. Siobhan, who treats them as equals, replies, "If you want to be equal, then you have to show people the same respect that you demand of them. If a woman says no to you, you accept that maybe you're not the right man for her. You don't assume you have an automatic right to love because you're in a wheelchair!"

The film's release was surrounded by controversy. For one, the actors who play the roles of disabled people are not disabled in real life - actors' unions have lobbied with film makers to follow government policy and encourage the greater presence of the disabled in the film industry. Though *Inside I am dancing* uses disabled people as extras, the lead roles have been given to non-disabled actors. However, Scope, a UK charity that supports disabled people, does agree that the film is a step in the right direction and portrays disabled people in a new light, conveying the stigma and discrimination associated with disability.

It was released under a different title in the USA, reportedly because the film makers were afraid that a movie on disability would not attract a wide viewership there. While there is no denying that this film is about disability, it does not try to evoke pity, or to show the viewer how tough life is for a patient

of cerebral palsy or Duchenne muscular dystrophy. It tries to tell us that disabled people do not always feel sad about being the way they are. They laugh, sing, cry, drink, get into fights and make the same mistakes that "normal" people do - or rather they wish to make the same mistakes that all of us make, given the chance to lead a "normal life"

The UK title comes from a scene in which the two friends, who are taken with other residents of Carrigmore on a fund collection drive to the city, escape from the group and go to a club. Rory says to Michael, "Come on, come and dance with me." Michael points to their wheelchairs and signs, "But we cannot dance," to which Rory replies, "Sure it's dancing! What do you think I'm doing inside?" When Rory suggests they spend the money they have collected, Michael has his reservations, but Rory in his signature wisecracking tone replies, "It's funding for the needs of the disabled. I'm disabled and I need a drink."

The film makes a case for independence and equality. It reveals how the rights of the people that society calls "special people" are often denied to them in the name of care giving. Needless to say, the film talks about a developed European society where the level of care at institutions is far better than the conditions in most of India's institutions.

We can view the film on multiple levels: as the story of an individual's fight against the system, or as the story of two friends who make mistakes, fail each other and learn from these, or as an exploration of what it is like to be disabled and find the world unsuitable for living. It turns back the mirror on a patronising society, asking if making transport accessible to the disabled is necessary, then what about making bridges suicide-friendly for the disabled as well? It is a film that looks at disability in a new light. Far from leaving you teary eyed; the film makes you laugh with its disabled characters and, in doing so, it manages to put the audience into the shoes of the disabled characters.