

A message from Boris...

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Appalling discrimination in the UK

Hearing about the incident just a few days ago in England where a man with Duchenne MD was asked to leave a cinema because his ventilator was “too loud” and reported as a “nuisance” by some movie-goers has made me question how some people can be so cruel and ignorant.

This man, Richard Bridger 31, was basically told that his assisted breathing machine - which was keeping him alive - was such an inconvenience to others that he was no longer welcome to partake in the movie-going experience.

Do these people realise that air is free and while most of us have the luxury of breathing unassisted, people with MD often need to rely on a ventilator to sustain their life?

I understand there are some very uninformed people living in this world, but what makes me so frustrated is that the cinema acted upon these ill-conceived complaints and effectively discriminated against this disabled man.

The cinema staff who placated these ludicrous grievances should be ashamed of themselves, as should those who voiced them.

Fair enough some complaints are valid, such as when someone is actively disrupting a movie like talking on a mobile phone or being obnoxious, but when someone is simply breathing that is not something that should be considered annoying. For anyone to tell another human being that their simple existence is frustrating to them is unfathomable.

Would have these people known that MD is defined as a progressive muscle destroying disorder which wastes all muscles away causing immobility, respiratory problems and cardiac complications? I am guessing not given their actions. This is why our work at MDA is so important, to teach others about this serious condition and shed some light on the difficulties faced by people living with MD.

In a perfect world it would be nice to see the publicists of the movie, Taken 3, speak up and condemn the cinema for their actions. Or at least have the cinema make a donation to the MD Campaign in the UK, rather than just inviting him back to re-watch the film from which he was kicked out.

The small sector within society represented by those six movie-goers, who made the reports, should be more tolerant and understanding then, and only then, will people with disabilities have fairness and equality with their peers in society.

Here's hoping we never see this kind of disgusting discrimination here in Australia because I don't think I would be quite as patient if this happened on our doorstep.

Boris M Struk
Executive Director