

Learning Disability Specialist Library

Evidence Bulletin 002 – May 2007

What is it?

The LDSL is the learning disability specialist library of the National Library for Health. It exists to bring together and make available the best current evidence to support decision makers in supporting people with learning disabilities.

Each month, we scan a number of publications and highlight three or four key articles which add important new knowledge to the field. We will present the key messages from those articles in this bulletin, and link you to extended summaries or articles which will be available on the LDSL site.

You can receive the **LDSL Evidence Bulletin** by registering at:

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/>

This month:

- **LDSL National Knowledge Week**

National Knowledge Weeks provide an opportunity for a Specialist Library to collaborate with appropriate organisations, societies and individuals to present a comprehensive collection of up-to-date information that has been subject to rigorous selection criteria for a particular topic.

People with learning disabilities have a higher level of health needs than the general population, many of which are unmet. The Learning Disability Health Needs Knowledge Week provides concise summaries of published research in the following areas:

- Cancer
- Respiratory Disease
- Epilepsy and Challenging Behaviour
- Coronary Heart Disease

See **LDSL Knowledge Week** visit: <http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/>

- **What has happened in the lives of 142 children and adults with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities?**

This study followed up 142 individuals with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities, looking at the extent to which the policy objectives stated in the Scottish Executive's strategy 'The Same as You' were achieved for this cohort. The study looked at outcomes in relation to accommodation, day services and mortality. The authors found that the numbers living in congregate care had increased from 38% to 43%. Only two people were in supported living arrangements.

Day Services continued to be delivered on the traditional model, with only two people attending courses at college.

30 people had died in the ten years of the study, 21.1% of cohort, with the average age of death being 41.1 years. The authors suggest that the high level of mortality in this population emphasises the need for more effective health care for people with complex needs.

Policy, service pathways and mortality: a 10-year longitudinal study of people with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities: Hogg, J; Juhlberg, K; Lambe, L in Journal of Intellectual Disability Research 51 (5), 366–376. 2007

LDSL Summary

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/ViewResource.aspx?resID=260313&tabID=289&catID=5024>

- **Are Organisational Factors important in affecting placement breakdown for people with challenging behaviour?**

This study looked at two groups of people, described by managers as the most severely challenging to their services. The first group had undergone a placement breakdown, or were awaiting a move to another placement; the second group had their placement maintained. The study looked the characteristics of the people and their services, to see which technical features of the service might be associated with appropriately maintaining placements for people.

It was possible to identify a range of characteristics associated with maintaining placements, including good written guidance and intervention programmes, staff supervision and post-incident debriefing. Despite the small scale of the study, the authors suggest commissioners of residential services for people with severely challenging behaviour should attend to the 'technical competence' of the placement, and that national guidance should reflect this.

Organisational and individual factors associated with breakdown of residential placements for people intellectual disabilities; Broadhurst, S; Mansell J in Journal of Intellectual Disability Research, Vol 51, (4) 293-301 2007

LDSL Summary

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/ViewResource.aspx?resID=260326&tabID=289&catID=1119>

- **What psychological factors predict employment outcomes for people in a supported employment service?**

Over 200 supported employment schemes operate in the UK today. Schemes aimed at supporting individuals into supported employment work to identify individual employment preferences, what skills people have and the best way to help them obtain supported employment – real work in integrated settings.

This study looked at the psychological factors which might predict employment outcome for people in a supported employment service. It did this by interviewing 60 people over a 10 month period whilst in a 'jobseek' group. 34 people were followed up three months after they had left the service and 22 of these 6 months later.

The authors found few psychological differences between those who got and kept a job and those who did not. They found that people who stayed in a job for three months or more were more highly motivated for status but judged themselves less happy prior to getting the job than those who did not get a job or left before the end of three months. Motivation appeared related to general life satisfaction. Those who were most dissatisfied appeared most motivated to change their circumstances.

Psychological Factors Associated with Obtaining Employment, Hensel, E; Stenfoert Kroese, B; Rose, J in *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities* 20 (2), 175–181. 2007

LDSL Summary

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/ViewResource.aspx?resID=260312&tabID=289&catID=1122>

What else is new?

[Accessible Information for People with Intellectual Disabilities: Do Symbols Really Help?](#) Poncelas, A; Murphy G; in *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*

This study looked at whether a symbol-based manifesto around election time would increase the understanding of this material for people with learning disabilities. Participants were randomly assigned to two groups to receive either a text-based manifesto or a symbol-based manifesto (with text).

Both versions produced relatively low levels of understanding, and there was no better understanding shown by the group with the symbols, suggesting that the addition of symbols to simple texts does not necessarily improve people's understanding of it.

<http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-3148.2006.00334.x>

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