

Learning Disability Specialist Library

Evidence Bulletin 008 – November 2007

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Each month we scan publications and highlight key articles which add important new knowledge to the field. Key messages are presented here with links to extended summaries on the LDSL site.

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- **What is the prevalence and incidence of mental ill health in people with profound intellectual disabilities?**

This population based prospective study sets out to identify the prevalence and incidence of mental ill health in adults with profound intellectual disabilities. Whilst there is increasingly evidence of the impact of mental ill health of adults with mild to severe ID, there has been little published work on those with profound ID. This study used a number of measures over a two year period, looking at the point prevalence in an administratively defined population, and then the incidence after two years, in order to identify factors that might predict mental ill health in this group.

Interestingly, the point prevalence varied considerably, depending on the criteria used. Clinical criteria suggested a point prevalence rate of 52.2%, with 45.1% by Diagnostic Criteria for Psychiatric Disorders for use with Adults with Learning Disabilities (DC-LD); 10.9% by the ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders Diagnostic Criteria for Research (1993) (DCR-ICD-10) and 11.4% by Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (2004) (DSM-IV-TR).

The factors found to be predictive of mental ill health were: type of accommodation/support and the number of important or stressful life events. Age, gender, living in areas of greatest deprivation, and having special communication needs were not found to be predictive.

The findings suggested that people living in congregate care settings (nursing homes and large residential care homes) were at particularly high risk of acquiring an episode of mental ill-health.

The authors suggest that carers and supporters of people with profound intellectual disabilities need to be aware of the impact of life events on the mental health of those they support, and that support to understand events and changes is needed.

The Prevalence, Incidence, and Factors Predictive of Mental Ill-Health in Adults with Profound Intellectual Disabilities, Cooper et al in Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; 20 (6), 493–501

LDSL Summary

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/viewResource.aspx?resID=273775&code=6877ec5f889c8b4118bdd2a1fbc5632>

- **What factors influence the use and effectiveness of hearing aids in people with intellectual disabilities?**

People with intellectual disabilities have an increased risk of hearing impairment, and yet rehabilitation with hearing aids often fails in practice. The authors carried out a descriptive pilot study to look at what contributes to the expectations of and satisfaction with hearing aids in adults with mild or moderate Intellectual Disabilities, and to what extent carers impact on the use and maintenance of those aids?

This was a small descriptive study (beginning with 16 adults with a mild or moderate ID and a recent diagnosis of hearing impairment), using a semi-structured interview, administered by somebody with experience of working with people with intellectual disabilities.

Unsurprisingly, all the satisfaction domains described for the general population could be recognized, with people expressing explicit wishes on the looks of hearing aids, and concerns about comfort and usability. However, most of the participants were partially or totally dependent on carers for the use and maintenance of the aids, and a number of minor and in one instance major functional problems went unmanaged during the period of the study (2.5 months).

Hearing aids: expectations and satisfaction of people with an intellectual disability, a descriptive pilot study, Meuwese-Jongejeug et al., in Journal of Intellectual Disability Research 51 (11), 913–922.

LDSL Summary

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/viewResource.aspx?resID=273776&code=73f2e44fbb7828d0b2adbc46da18d890>

- **What is the impact of group cognitive behavioural therapy on the sexually abusive behaviour of men with intellectual disabilities?**

Studies of the sexual abuse of people with intellectual disabilities demonstrate that about half of the perpetrators of the abuse are also people with intellectual disabilities. It is comparatively recently that intellectually disabled men with sexually abusive behaviour have received treatment. This study set out to look at the impact of cognitive behavioural group treatment of a small number of men referred by managers and professionals from south London. The treatment took place in two groups, lasting over a year, longer than in previously reported studies. Access to the treatment was not dependent on consent to involvement in the research study, so a small number of men chose not to consent to the research, but took part in the treatment programme.

The study showed significant improvements on a number of measures between the start and end of the group. Also, during the year that the groups ran, no further non-sexual offences were committed by any man and most men showed no further sexually abusive behaviour.

A small number of the men involved in the groups did show further sexually abusive behaviour during and after the groups. They were each on the autistic spectrum, and the authors suggest that their particular difficulty in understanding other people's perspectives and feelings might have impacted on their inability to stop themselves re-offending.

Whilst the study shows some significant positive treatment effects of the one year groups, the authors point out that it was a small scale study, and no control group was used. They suggest the need for a larger multi-site trials with appropriate controls.

Cognitive-behavioural treatment for men with intellectual disabilities and sexually abusive behaviour: a pilot study, Murphy et al., in *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research* 51 (11), 902–912

LDSL Summary

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/learningdisabilities/viewResource.aspx?resID=273777&code=4ad0e26e947c2e16b21f4c6fafced1a9>

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