

**The occupational transition process to upper secondary school, further education and/or work in Sweden – as described by young adults with Asperger syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**

Vedrana Bolic Baric<sup>1</sup>, Helena Hemmingsson<sup>1</sup>, Kristina Hellberg<sup>2</sup>, Anette Kjellberg<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>*Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Linköping university, Norrköping, Sweden,* <sup>2</sup>*Department of Pedagogy, Linnaeus University, Vaxjo, Sweden*

**Introduction:** The occupational transition from compulsory school to upper secondary school and further education and/or work involves daunting experiences for all young adults however, a growing body of research has demonstrated that both young adults with Asperger syndrome (AS) or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have a particularly difficult time becoming established in the labour market and in further education.

**Objectives:** The aim was to describe the occupational transition process to upper secondary school, further education and/or work, and to discover what support influences the process from the perspectives of young adults with Asperger syndrome (AS) or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

**Method:** This qualitative study was performed in Sweden and comprised interviews with 15 young adults recruited from community based day centres. Results: The participants' took three different pathways following compulsory school: (i) "A straightforward occupational transition to community-based day centres"; (ii) "Interrupted periods of adult education, community-based day centres and work in the regular labour market" and (iii) "Occupational transition to university studies and employment in the regular labour market". Support influencing the process included: occupational transition preparation in compulsory school, practical work experience in a safe environment, and support beyond the workplace.

**Conclusion:** Overall, the results revealed that the occupational transition process was a longitudinal process starting in compulsory school and continuing until the young adults obtained and retained employment, or entered further education. The occupational transition process was influenced by the interaction between environmental support (e.g. different services), and personal factors such as having transition goals.