

An international scoping review of workplace adjustments for employees with mental illness

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Purpose

- To explore what is known about workplace adjustments for people with mental illness
 - Which adjustments are most frequently negotiated?
 - What are the costs and benefits?

What are workplace adjustments?

- Workplace adjustments (also known as accommodations or modifications) refer to adjustments designed to enable people with disabilities to fulfil the requirements of a job, such as changes to:
 - Scheduling
 - Job tasks
 - Social support
 - Other workplace conditions

Background

- People with a mental illness have a right to reasonable adjustments in the workplace in many countries internationally
- Barriers to negotiating adjustments may include:
 - a lack of awareness regarding disability discrimination legislation
 - stigma – leading to a reluctance to disclose
 - the intangible nature of workplace adjustments for people with mental illness

Background

- Supported employment services support people with mental illness to get and keep a job, including negotiating reasonable adjustments
- Occupational rehabilitation services and occupational therapists across a range of settings may also play a role in supporting employment participation
- However little is known about the types, frequencies, costs and benefits of workplace adjustments

Methods - Overview

- A literature search of relevant peer reviewed research articles was conducted using five electronic databases (1993 – 2013)
 - CINAHL, PsycINFO, MEDLINE, EMBASE, Cochrane Library
- Case descriptions, reports, and opinion papers were excluded
- McMaster Critical Review forms completed to extract data and assess quality of eligible articles
- Evidence table was developed

Eligible Studies

- 10 eligible articles related to 9 studies
- Varied quality
- Majority were conducted in USA (individual studies from UK, Canada, Sweden, and the Netherlands)
- Three of the studies only included participants with high prevalence mental illness

Types and Frequencies

The most frequently adjustments were:

1. Assistance from employment support worker during hiring or on the job
 2. Flexible scheduling/reduced hours
 3. Modified training and supervision
 4. Modified job duties/description
-  Physical accommodations in the workplace

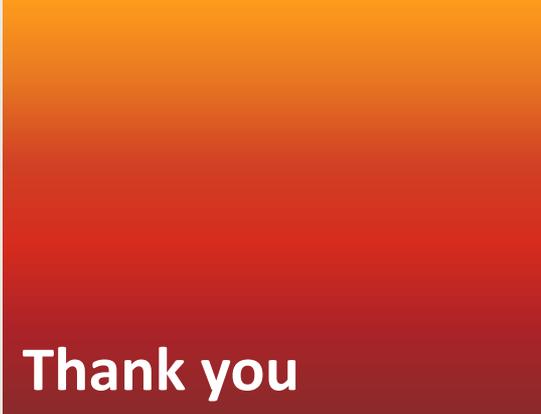
(MacDonald-Wilson et al, 2002; Fabian et al, 1993; Granger, 2000)

Costs and Benefits

- The vast majority of adjustments had no direct costs
(Wang *et al*, 2011; MacDonald-Wilson *et al*, 2002; Fabian *et al*, 1993; Granger, Baron & Robinson, 1997)
- None of the studies reviewed measured the indirect costs
- Preliminary evidence suggests that workplace adjustments may improve job tenure and performance (Fabian *et al*, 1993; Wahlin *et al*, 2013)

Summary and Implications

- There is likely an unmet need for workplace adjustments for people with mental illness
- Education is required for employers, rehabilitation professionals, and employees to increase understanding of disability discrimination legislation and workplace adjustments for people with mental illness
- Workplace adjustments are an important area for further research



Thank you

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REVIEW

Workplace Accommodations for People with Mental Illness: A Scoping Review

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