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A Critical Review of the Impact of Individual Placement Support (IPS) for Enabling People with Severe and Enduring Mental Illness into Employment

Karen Wilson, Carrie Hewitt, Thomas Moore, Gemma Rogers, Pensri Noynil, Stephanie Collinson & Nikki Blakey

Why was the research conducted?

- Employment is recognised as a vital health outcome for people with mental illness (MHT 2016). Over 132,000 people with disabilities are supported into work through specialist employment schemes (DWP, 2016). People with severe and enduring mental illness have the highest unemployment rate, experience complex barriers and reduced opportunities to access work (Ravello, 2014).

- IPS combines employment and mental health services to provide an effective approach for supporting people into employment (Centre for Mental Health, 2014). There is a paucity of evidence within the UK around the implementation and impact of the IPS approach to enable people with severe and enduring mental illness to access work.

Aim

To conduct a critical review of the literature considering the impact of IPS on people with severe and enduring mental illness (SMI) within the UK to access work.

Objectives

1. Conduct a synthesised literature search to identify relevant literature relating to the impact of IPS for people with severe and enduring mental illness.
2. Analyse and critically appraise the literature that meets the inclusion criteria.
3. Undertake a thematic analysis of the literature to draw out lessons learnt from implementing IPS.
4. Make recommendations for future practice and research.

1. Literature search

- 10 studies met the inclusion criteria:
  - 5 qualitative studies, 4 qualitative and quantitative studies, and 1 systematic review.

2. Critical Appraisal

- “Studies of efficacy (Table 2) are few and of mixed quality. High quality IPS fidelity was found to be a substantial predictor of successful implementation.” - Thomas J and Harden A (2008)

3. Methodology

- The effectiveness of IPS on employment outcome studied found that 85 (55%) of the individuals assigned to IPS worked for at least 1 day per week for at least 4 weeks at follow-up compared with 18 (11%) individuals assigned to vocational services.

- The EQOLISE trial found that IPS was more effective than vocational services for people with severe mental illness. Every vocational outcome studied found that 85 (55%) of the individuals assigned to IPS worked for at least 1 day per week for at least 4 weeks at follow-up compared with 18 (11%) individuals assigned to vocational services.

- Employment rate decreased for long term service users with schizophrenia (p<0.01). When cross sectional surveys were not carried out, employment rate decreased (p<0.05). IPS was viewed as an enabler to support employment.

3. Thematic Analysis

- Three themes emerged: emotional support, practical assistance and a client-centred approach.

- More than 50% of participants interviewed were satisfied with IPS. Engagement and confidence boosting, and practical support for job seeking were rated highly by many with important factors in the effectiveness of IPS.

- Of all participants interviewed were satisfied with IPS. IPS encouraged and confidence boosting, and practical support for job seeking were rated highly by many important factors in the effectiveness of IPS.

Conclusions

This study found that despite a wide range of evidence to support the impact and cost-effectiveness of IPS, there is limited implementation of IPS within the UK. The impact of IPS as an intervention for supporting individuals with severe and enduring mental illness into employment is influenced by the following factors:

- External factors: such as motivation to provide employment services and employer attitudes towards an individual’s work capability resulted in the effectiveness of IPS.

- Socio-economic context: services were not in fact many that they want to work in paid employment when asked. Instead, it appears that a minority of probably motivated individuals with severe mental illness would like to work.

- Employment barriers: such as motivation and work capability resulted in the effectiveness of IPS.

Recommendations for future research:

- Further evaluation and knowledge of application regarding IPS is needed within the UK. Qualitative research is required to establish the impact of IPS on employment outcomes for individuals with severe and enduring mental illness.

- The role of employment and mental health services providing recommendations for future practice:

- The principles of IPS need to be set within a radical employment pathway for consistency in supporting individuals with severe and enduring mental illness into work. Collaborative working would increase employment opportunities and positive outcomes for individuals with severe and enduring mental illness.

- Occupational therapists and mental health services are required to improve client contact practice and inter-agency working. Collaborative working would increase employment opportunities and positive outcomes for individuals with severe and enduring mental illness.

- Recommendations for future practice:

- Employment barriers: such as motivation and work capability resulted in the effectiveness of IPS.

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Table 1: Frequency of themes across the chosen articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Barriers to employment</th>
<th>Sustained employment</th>
<th>Supportive employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical assistance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client-centred approach</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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Table 2: Summary of key findings

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Figure 2: Themes and Sub-Themes

- Sustained employment
- Supportive employment
- Emotional support
- Practical assistance
- Client-centred approach

Summary of findings

- IPS is effective in supporting people with severe and enduring mental illness into employment.
- IPS is more effective than vocational services for people with severe mental illness.
- Employment rate decreased for long term service users with schizophrenia.
- IPS was viewed as an enabler to support employment.
- More than 50% of participants interviewed were satisfied with IPS.
- IPS encouraged and confidence boosting, and practical support for job seeking were rated highly by many important factors in the effectiveness of IPS.

References for included studies

- While the study found that despite a wide range of evidence to support the impact and cost-effectiveness of IPS, there is limited implementation of IPS within the UK. The impact of IPS as an intervention for supporting individuals with severe and enduring mental illness into employment is influenced by the following factors:
- External factors: such as motivation to provide employment services and employer attitudes towards an individual’s work capability resulted in the effectiveness of IPS.
- Socio-economic context: services were not in fact many that they want to work in paid employment when asked. Instead, it appears that a minority of probably motivated individuals with severe mental illness would like to work.
- Employment barriers: such as motivation and work capability resulted in the effectiveness of IPS.
- Recommendations for future research:
- Further evaluation and knowledge of application regarding IPS is needed within the UK. Qualitative research is required to establish the impact of IPS on employment outcomes for individuals with severe and enduring mental illness.
- The role of employment and mental health services providing recommendations for future practice:
- The principles of IPS need to be set within a radical employment pathway for consistency in supporting individuals with severe and enduring mental illness into work. Collaborative working would increase employment opportunities and positive outcomes for individuals with severe and enduring mental illness.
- Occupational therapists and mental health services are required to improve client contact practice and inter-agency working. Collaborative working would increase employment opportunities and positive outcomes for individuals with severe and enduring mental illness.
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