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Wilson, Karen, Hewitt, Carrie, Moore, Thomas, Rogers, Gemma, Noynil, Pensri, Collinson, Stephanie and Blakey, Nikki (2017) A Critical Review of the Impact of Individual Placement Support for Enabling People with Severe and Enduring Mental Illness into Employment. In: Occupational Therapy Show, 21-22 November 2017, Birmingham.

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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

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Why was the research conducted?

- Employment is recognised as a vital health outcome for people with mental illness (MHTF 2016). Over 132,00 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 SMI enduring mental illness to access work.

Aim

To conduct a critical review of 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 systemised 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 appraised.
4. Make recommendations for future practice and research.

Methodology

1. Literature Search

Databases: Cochrane library., MEDLINE, AMED, PsychINFO,:, Psych, SocIndex, OT Seeker and Pubmed.

Search Terms: Mental health OR Mental illness Or mental disorders AND supported employment OR individual placement support or Voc Rehab* AND effect* AND benefit* AND impact

Inclusion Criteria: UK based, published within the last 10 years (2006-2016), must mention "IPS" and "mental health".

2. Critical Appraisal

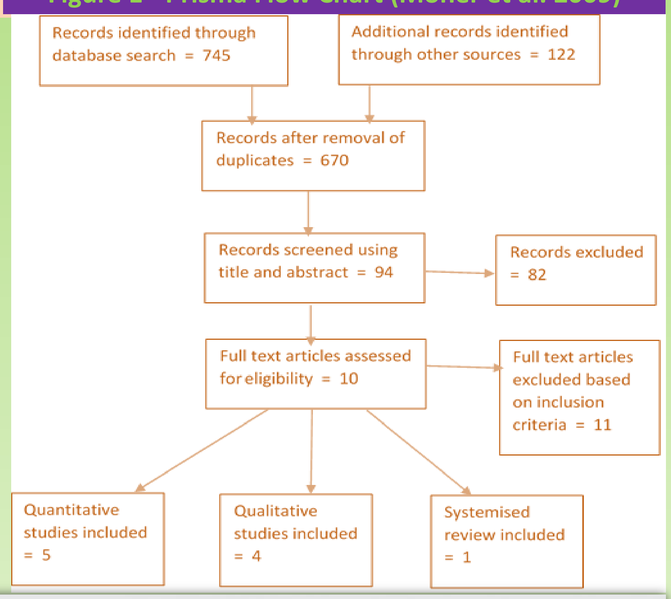
McMasters Critical Appraisal tool (Law et al. 2007) was used to allow qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods studies to be critically appraised.

3. Thematic Analysis

An inductive approach was adopted to discover and understand themes that emerged from the chosen articles (Thomas and Harden, 2008).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Figure 1 - Prisma Flow Chart (Moher et al. 2009)



1. Literature search:
- 10 articles met the inclusion criteria.
- 5 quantitative studies, 4 qualitative studies and 1 systemised review.

2. Critical Appraisal
- Diversity of studies (Table 2) gathered through triangulation.
- High quality IPS fidelity was found to have a substantial impact in helping participants sustain employment.
- High quality studies found IPS to have greater impact than other VR.
- Longitudinal studies with semi-structured interviews found enhanced data on the impact of IPS.

3. Thematic Analysis
- Frequency was mapped (Table 1)
- 4 main themes emerged (Figure 2)
- Analysis of 14 subthemes showed many barriers and enablers such as the integration of IPS.

Figure 2: Themes and Sub-Themes

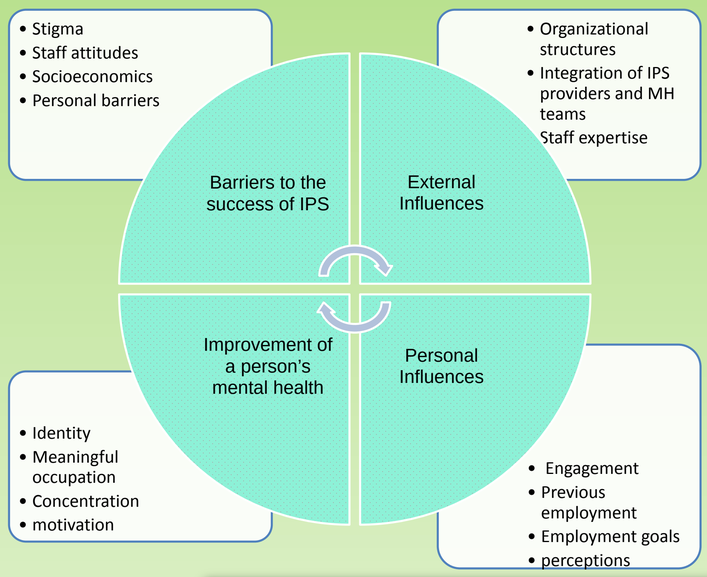


Table 1: Frequency of themes across the chosen articles

Articles	Barriers to the success of IPS	External influences	Improvement of a person's mental health	Personal influences
Johnson et al. (2009) Service users' perceptions of the effectiveness ingredients in supported employment		X	X	
Becker et al. (2007) The effectiveness of supported employment for people with severe mental illness: an RCT	X	X		X
Rinaldi, Montibeller and Perkins (2011) Increasing the employment rate for people with longer-term mental health problems		X		X
Veggel, Waghorn and Dias (2015) Implementing evidence-based supported employment in Sussex for people with severe mental illness		X		X
Boycott, Schneider and Osborne (2014) Creating a culture of employment in mental health	X		X	X
Heffernan and Pilkington (2011) Supported employment for persons with mental illness: systematic review of the effectiveness of individual placement and support in the UK				X
Heslin et al. (2011) Randomised controlled trail of supported employment in England: 2 year follow up of supported work and needs study				X
Essen (2012) Does Individual Placement and Support really 'reflect client goals'?	X	X	X	X
Knapp et al. (2013) Supported employment: cost effectiveness across six European sites		X		X
Boycott, Akhtar and Schneider (2015) Work is good for me	X	X		X

Table 2: diversity of studies

Table 1	Author, year	Aims	Methodology	Sample Type / Size	Data Analysis	Key findings
1	Rinaldi, Montibeller, and Perkins (2011)	Identify the effects of IPS within 4 community mental health teams.	Quantitative (Cross-sectional study/interviews)	1990 – 1999 mean of 569 longer term service users . 2003 – 2006 mean of 728 longer term service users.	A service user experience survey and cross sectional survey were used. Brief discussion of data analysis. Some data was presented in tables and charts, indicating a form of data analysis had taken place.	Employment rate decreased for long term service users with schizophrenia ($p<0.01$). When cross sectional survey was not carried out, employment rate decreased ($p<0.05$). IPS was viewed as an enabler. to employment
2	Burns et al. (2007)	To assess the effectiveness of IPS compared with existing vocational services and the effectiveness in different European welfare systems and labour markets.	RCT	312 patients covering age 18-65 years. Six European countries (UK, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Netherlands and Bulgaria).	Patients were follow-up for 18 months, with interviews at baseline and 6, 12 and 18 months. The analysis of job tenure was based on patients who had been in competitive employment for at least 1 day.	IPS was more effective than vocational services for every vocational outcome with 55% patients assigned to IPS working for at least 1 day compared with 28% patients assigned to vocational services.
3	Johnson et al .(2009)	To find out service users' views of what they found helpful about support employment.	Qualitative (Interviews)	People with severe and enduring mental health problems/ 888 people contracted, 270 met inclusion criteria. 32 withdrew	Using thematic analysis the first step was data reduction followed by a summary and display of data.	Three themes emerged; emotional support, practical assistance and a client-centred approach.
4	Boycott, Akhtar, and Schneider (2015).	To explore service user's experiences of being enrolled in an IPS service in the UK during the recession.	Qualitative (Interviews)	Purposive sampling was used. Participants were recruited from community mental health teams and must have received IPS for at least 6 months. 31 service users participated in interviews.	Through the method of thematic analysis, six recurring themes were highlighted. (Perceived barriers to work, disclosure of mental illness, preparation for work, problems in finding work, advice for others, and satisfaction with the IPS service).	28 out of 31 participants interviewed were satisfied with the IPS. Encouragement and confidence boosting, and practical support such as job searching and help with CVs were important factors in the effectiveness of IPS.
5	Knapp et al. (2013)	To investigate the economic case for IPS for people with severe mental health problems compared to standard vocational rehabilitation.	RCT	156-IPS . 156-standard VR People who entered the trial had been ill and experiencing major difficulties accomplishing normal roles for at least 2 years and had not been employed for at least 1 year.	The cost of IPS intervention compared to vocational services interventions included data from an economic evaluation, additional days worked in competitive settings and percentage of individuals that who worked at least 1 day	The EQOLISE trial found that IPS was more effective than vocational services for people with SMI. Every vocational outcome studied found that 85 (55%) of the individuals assigned to IPS worked for at least 1 day during the 18-month follow-up period compared with 43 (28%) individuals assigned to vocational services.
6	Essen (2012)	To examine the evidential basis for the claim that work improves mental health is also involved in promoting IPS in the U.K.	Qualitative (Systematic review)	Not Applicable	Comparison of previous literature emerging themes highlighted that IPS research in the UK is limited . Justification is needed to underpin why IPS should be implemented within services. Further analysis of government policies/initiative and socio economic impact is required.	More research to justify why IPS needs to be implemented in the UK as current/previous literature is limited. Most unemployed secondary mental health service users do not in fact express that they want to work in paid employment when asked. Instead, it appears that a minority of probably
7	Heffernan and Pilkington (2011)	To examine the evidence for the effectiveness of the IPS model of supported employment within the United Kingdom	Qualitative (Systematic review)	Five studies met the inclusion criteria. These comprised one European multi-centre RCT where London was one of six centres, one solely UK-based RCT, one cohort study, one naturalistic study and one small service evaluation.	Final papers for inclusion were agreed by both reviewers. A data extraction form was piloted and used to extract data from each paper. Data were compared by both reviewers. Studies were critically appraised using a quality appraisal checklist developed by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence.	High fidelity IPS increase the proportion of patients engaged in work or education/training over the short- to medium-term (6–18 months follow-up).
8	Veggel, Waghorn and Dias (2015)	To evaluate a large-scale implementation of evidence-based supported employment for people with severe mental illness, at 17 locations throughout Sussex, England.	Qualitative (Observational study)	Volunteer participants were identified from among those who expressed a vocational goal to a mental health team member. Those who expressed a vocational goal were referred directly to the employment specialist at each site by members of the community mental health teams.	To achieve the first aim, the quality of IPS implementation was recorded at an item level using the 25-item IPS fidelity scale. To realize the second aim, the mean total scores for pre-IPS and IPS cohorts were calculated. The third study aim, employment and vocational results were re-examined descriptively with respect to other parameters.	The new IPS sites attained higher fidelity with respect to IPS principles and practices than the pre-IPS sites. Significantly more IPS participants commenced competitive employment than pre-individual placement and support participants.
9	Boycott, Schneider, and Osborne (2014) .	To draw out lessons learnt from implementing IPS	Qualitative (Observational study)	Purposeful sampling between to specialised mental health units included 55 EIP and 19 rehabilitation units.	Observations of attitudes among staff and clients during implementation of IPS.	Younger people are more sensitive and open to IPS. Occupational therapist has a benefit impact on the implementation and outcome of IPS within services. Culture is influential but this can be changed with perseverance.
10	**Heslin et al. (2011)**	To prove that significantly more people receiving IPS would gain employment than those receiving usual services.	RCT	Probability sampling/randomised CHMT patients (met inclusion criteria). 219 sample size.	Baseline:12months, 24 months, independent assessor/SPSS	IPS more effective at two year follow up but low levels of employment between both groups. Intervention was statistically significant. Poor links between services influences IPS. Time limits can be an issue for people with SMI

https://www.therathrive.com/services/for-parents/parent-groups/supporting-hands-slide/

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

- Psychosocial issues were not addressed by teams providing IPS thus affecting employment outcomes.
- Complex barriers such as stigma, employment support specialists and employer attitudes towards an individual's work capability resulted in disengagement in the IPS process.
- Lack of specialist skills within employment teams, work preparation (a principle of IPS) resources and employment opportunities within the locality.
- Socio-economic context-service users struggling to cope financially after gaining employment therefore being caught in the "benefits trap".

Internal

- Long periods of unemployment and transition to work caused distress.
- An individual's self-efficacy in their occupational skills.
- Participation in meaningful work occupations improved motivation to engage in the IPS programme.
- The impact of IPS improved when intervention focussed upon an individual's employment goals (Veggel, Waghorn & Dias, 2015).

Recommendations for Future Practice & Research

Priorities for future research:

- Further evaluation and knowledge of application regarding IPS is needed within the UK. Qualitative research is required to establish the true impact of IPS on employment outcomes for individual's with severe and enduring mental illness.
- Service evaluation of employment and mental health services providing supported employment.

Recommendations for future practice:

- The principles of IPS need to be set within a national employment pathway for consistency in supporting individuals with severe and enduring mental illness into work. IPS training for employment support workers is key to increasing an understanding of mental health illness, addressing barriers and attitudes regarding an individual's work capability.
- Promoting recovery and optimising an individual's true potential in occupational skill and work capacity needs to be the key focus of intervention (The Council for Work and Health 2016).
- Integrated employment and mental health services are required to improve client centred practice and inter-agency working. Collaborative working would increase employment opportunities and positive outcomes for individuals with severe and enduring mental illness (Wilson and Cronin-Davis 2016).
- Occupational therapists can improve vocational outcomes for individuals by evaluating meaningful occupations that fit the person's work roles, occupational skill and work capabilities to meet task demands (COT 2008).
- Occupational therapists are well placed in supporting individual's with severe and enduring mental illness into mainstream employment. Inclusion of occupational therapists within employment teams is essential for optimising opportunities for work.

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