Learning Disabilities
Current Awareness Bulletin
February 2019

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The association between poor reading and internalising problems: A systematic review and meta-analysis.

Citation: Clinical psychology review; Feb 2019; vol. 67; p. 45-60
Author(s): Francis, Deanna A; Caruana, Nathan; Hudson, Jennifer L; McArthur, Genevieve M

Abstract: Numerous studies have demonstrated an association between learning disabilities and internalising problems such as anxiety and depression. However, our understanding of this association for people with specific types of learning disability - such as poor reading - is poorly understood. Here, we present the first systematic review and meta-analysis of studies that have examined associations between poor reading and internalising problems - including anxiety and depression - in children, adolescents, and adults. Our systematic search identified 34 studies comprising 16,275 participants (N = 2491 poor readers). Our meta-analysis revealed statistically significant differences between poor readers and typical readers on general measures of internalising problems (d = 0.41), as well as specific measures of anxiety (d = 0.41) and depression (d = 0.23). These outcomes suggest that poor readers are at moderate risk for experiencing internalising problems compared to typical readers, which appears to stem from a greater risk for anxiety than depression.

Resting-state electroencephalogram in learning-disabled children: power and connectivity analyses.

Citation: Neuroreport; Jan 2019; vol. 30 (no. 2); p. 95-101
Author(s): Jäncke, Lutz; Saka, Mohamad Yassin; Badawood, Omer; Alhamadi, Nsreen

Abstract: The neurophysiological underpinnings of learning disabilities remain unknown. In this clinical study, we recorded electroencephalograms for a large sample of children with learning disabilities (LD) and healthy control children (n=216) during resting states in which the eyes were either open or closed. We calculated the power and lagged phase coherence in six main frequency bands (delta, theta, lower and upper alpha, and lower and upper beta) to re-evaluate the question of whether children with LD show frontal theta power increases and posterior alpha band decreases on the basis of patterns of electroencephalogram oscillation, which could then be considered as evidence for the so-called 'maturational delay hypothesis.' We identified a general (not restricted to frontal electrodes) power increase in the theta band and no accompanying concomitant alpha band decrease at the posterior electrode position. In addition, we observed increased beta band power at frontal electrodes for LD children. With respect to lagged phase coherence, which is a coherence measure not influenced by volume conduction, we identified decreased coherence for children with LD in the upper alpha band during the eyes closed condition. We interpret this LD-specific resting-state activation pattern as indicating a suboptimally functioning neural resting-state network that provides a detrimental 'starting point' for task-specific brain activations.

Adapting dialectical behaviour therapy in forensic learning disability services: A grounded theory informed study of "what works"

Author(s): Browne, Claire; Brown, Gill; Smith, Ian C.
Citation: Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities; Jan 2019

Background: Emerging evidence indicates effectiveness of dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) for people with intellectual disabilities (PWID) in forensic settings; however, little is known about "what works" facilitating engagement and change.

Methods: Eleven interviews were conducted with nine service users across two secure inpatient services. Grounded theory was used to develop a model of perceived engagement and change.

Results: The model provides insights into how change occurs during DBT delivered in forensic
settings. DBT constitutes a challenging journey, yet provides the motivation and means to address individual’s intra-/interpersonal aggression and progress towards release. Participants experienced engaging with DBT as difficult and coercive, moving from compliance and avoidance to acceptance and change. Key factors included participants’ motivation, beliefs about safety and ability to change, and interactions with staff.

**Conclusion:** Recommendations are made for increasing intrinsic motivation, reducing perceived coercion and distress, and for future research to address potential aversive elements and enhance effectiveness. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2019 APA, all rights reserved) (Source: journal abstract)

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**People with learning disabilities have lower life expectancy and cancer screening rates**

**Citation:** BMJ : British Medical Journal (Online); Jan 2019; vol. 364

**Author(s):** Thornton, Jacqui

**Abstract:** Women with a learning disability in England have an average life expectancy of 65, GP data from NHS Digital have shown—18 years lower than those without.1 The inequality is greater in women than men. Patients with learning disabilities also had lower rates of cancer screening, most notably in cervical screening for women: only 31% had smear tests, compared with 73.2% of those without a learning disability. A survey of 272 GPs by the charity in 20172 found that 64% had had less than a day's training on meeting the needs of patients with learning disabilities and autism and that 44% wanted additional training on cancer screening in this patient population.

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**Subjection of people with learning disabilities in the UK: Commentary on indifference of a devalued group.**

**Citation:** British Journal of Learning Disabilities; Mar 2019; vol. 47 (no. 1); p. 1-4

**Author(s):** Gates, Bob

**Abstract:** An introduction to the journal is presented that focuses on issues related to people with learning disabilities, including experiences of people with intellectual disabilities in Ireland when moving home using an inclusive research approach, whether communication partners of children and adults with developmental disabilities in Australia can learn and retain a basic Key Word Skills vocabulary, and attitudes amongst British support staff towards sexuality and adults with learning disabilities.

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**Autism Spectrum Disorder symptomatology in children with Mucopolysaccharide Disease Type III.**

**Citation:** British Journal of Learning Disabilities; Mar 2019; vol. 47 (no. 1); p. 5-11

**Author(s):** Wolfenden, Claire; Wittkowski, Anja; Jones, Simon A.; Rust, Stewart; Hare, Dougal J.

**Abstract:** Accessible Summary: We now have a much better understanding of the specific characteristics of the many and often rare conditions that are associated with intellectual disabilities [learning disabilities] We examined a condition called Mucopolysaccharidosis Type III [MPS III] sometimes called Sanfilippo syndrome Many children with MPS III also appear to show signs of autism but an additional diagnosis of autism is time-consuming and not always available to families We, therefore, measured autistic symptoms in children with MPS III and found that they often had problems in social responsiveness Children with MPS III and their families might therefore routinely benefit from the types of support offered to children with autism Symptons of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are present in children with mucopolysaccharidosis type III (MPS III). Questionnaires measuring the two core domains of ASD (social responsiveness and repetitive behaviour) were
completed by N = 17 parents of children with MPS III. Results indicated that scores consistent with ASD were reported by all parents on a measure of social responsiveness but lower scores were reported for repetitive behaviour. The findings provide support for the provision of additional interventions, focusing on social and communication difficulties, for children with MPS III across all phases of their disorder.

"You hear voices too?": A hearing voices group for people with learning disabilities in a community mental health setting.

Citation: British Journal of Learning Disabilities; Mar 2019; vol. 47 (no. 1); p. 42-49
Author(s): Roche-Morris, Aisling; Cheetham, John

Abstract: Accessible Summary: We ran a group for people with learning disabilities who hear voices that nobody else can hear. During the group, people talked about what it is like to hear voices nobody else can hear and how they cope. We interviewed people before and after the group. We asked them about what their voices say, how they felt about their voices and why they thought they heard voices. We also asked them about their quality of life and if they liked the group. People told us that they liked the group and found it helpful to talk to other people who hear voices. Some people said they felt better after the group. We want to run another group in the future and make it run for longer. We might run a group for family members, friends and carers.

Background: Hearing voices groups (HVGs) are effective avenues of support for people who hear voices in the general population yet their application and adaptation for people with learning disabilities who hear voices are scarce.

Methods: This paper is an evaluation of a pilot HVG for people with learning disabilities. Five people attended the group which ran once weekly for 6 weeks. Measures of psychological functioning and quality of life were collected before and after the group. Participants' understanding of their voice hearing experiences and the stigma associated with voice hearing were explored at the pre- and post-group stage.

Results: High attendance rates and positive satisfaction ratings suggested the group was acceptable to clients. Participants said they had increased understanding of voice hearing and endorsed the positive value of social support.

Conclusions: The use of quantitative outcome measures should be reviewed when conducting HVGs. Although the 6-week group was associated with positive feedback, there might be benefit in extending the number of sessions offered as well as involving carers. Bridging the gap between services available for those who hear voices in the general population compared to people with a learning disability is essential.


Citation: Journal of Learning Disabilities; Mar 2019; vol. 52 (no. 2); p. 109-119
Author(s): Theobald, Roddy J.; Goldhaber, Dan D.; Gratz, Trevor M.; Holden, Kristian L.

Abstract: We used longitudinal data from Washington State to investigate the relationships among career and technical education (CTE) enrollment, inclusion in general education, and high school and postsecondary outcomes for students with learning disabilities. We replicated earlier findings that students with learning disabilities who were enrolled in a "concentration" of CTE courses had higher rates of employment after graduation than observably similar students with learning disabilities who were enrolled in fewer CTE courses. We also found that students with learning disabilities who spent more time in general education classrooms in high school had higher rates of on-time graduation, college attendance, and employment than observably similar students with learning disabilities who spent less time in general education classrooms in these grades.
Genetic and Environmental Influences on Achievement Outcomes Based on Family History of Learning Disabilities Status.

Citation: Journal of Learning Disabilities; Mar 2019; vol. 52 (no. 2); p. 135-145
Author(s): Erbeli, Florina; Hart, Sara A.; Taylor, Jeanette

Abstract: A risk to develop a learning disability has been shown to run in families. Having a positive family history of learning disability seems to account for mean differences in achievement outcomes (reading, math) in that children with a positive family history score significantly lower compared to their peers with no such family history. However, the role of family history status in explaining etiological (genetic and environmental) differences among these subgroups of children has yet to be established. The present study of 872 twins (Mage = 13.30, SDage = 1.40) from the Florida Twin Project on Reading, Behavior, and Environment utilized a multigroup approach to examine etiological differences on reading, spelling, and math among two subgroups defined by family history status. Results showed significant mean differences on all achievement outcomes, aside from math; however, no significant etiological differences on any achievement outcome were found among the two subgroups. Results support previous literature that the risk for developing a learning disability is transmitted through a family, but this is seemingly not manifested by differential etiology.

Quality of Explanation as an Indicator of Fraction Magnitude Understanding.

Citation: Journal of Learning Disabilities; Mar 2019; vol. 52 (no. 2); p. 181-191
Author(s): Foreman-Murray, Lindsay; Fuchs, Lynn S.

Abstract: Students' explanations of their mathematical thinking and conclusions have become a greater part of the assessment landscape in recent years. With a sample of 71 fourth-grade students at risk for mathematics learning disabilities, we investigated the relation between student accuracy in comparing the magnitude of fractions and the quality of students' explanations of those comparisons, as well as the relation between those measures and scores on a criterion test: released fraction items from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. We also considered the extent to which reasoning and language contribute to the prediction. Results indicated a significant moderate correlation between accuracy and explanation quality. Commonality analyses indicated that explanation quality accounts for little variance in National Assessment of Educational Progress scores beyond what is accounted for by traditional measures of magnitude understanding. Implications for instruction and assessment are discussed.

Autism-specific health checks highlighted in NHS plan.

Citation: Learning Disability Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 22 (no. 1); p. 6-6
Author(s): Evans, Nick

Abstract: When he unveiled his NHS Long Term Plan, NHS England chief executive Simon Stevens was clear it would improve services for people with learning disabilities and autism.

Campaign to reduce child prescriptions.

Citation: Learning Disability Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 22 (no. 1); p. 7-7
Author(s):
Abstract: The Stopping Over-Medication of People with Learning Disability, Autism or Both (STOMP) campaign has been extended to include children, young people and their families.

Gaps and disparities in access to reasonable adjustments persist.

Citation: Learning Disability Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 22 (no. 1); p. 10-10
Author(s): Atkinson, Dave

Abstract: Learning disability nurses are adept at making reasonable adjustments to healthcare services to ensure equality of access and equity of outcome, however many other groups of disabled people in the Equality Act 2010 have similar entitlements.

Training school nurses in pain assessment benefits students with learning disabilities.

Citation: Learning Disability Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 22 (no. 1); p. 10-10
Author(s): Atkinson, Dave

Abstract: If not recognised and addressed, learning disabled students’ experiences of pain can cause absenteeism and reduce their ability to engage in and benefit from educational activities.

A century of learning disability nursing.

Citation: Learning Disability Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 22 (no. 1); p. 11-11
Author(s): Mitchell, Duncan

Abstract: What can we learn from the first 100 years of learning disability nursing and is there cause for celebration? The UK’s first learning disability nurses were registered as mental deficiency nurses in 1919. This term was used until after the second world war when it was replaced by mental subnormality nursing and then renamed mental handicap nursing in the 1970s. Learning disability nursing became the accepted term in the 1990s.

Developing strategic health facilitators to increase the uptake of annual learning disability health checks.

Citation: Learning Disability Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 22 (no. 1); p. 24-28
Author(s): George, Amy; Jones, Jenny; Anderson, Kym; Coates, Marta; Bailey, Carol

Abstract: People who have a learning disability have increased health risks compared to the general population and access healthcare less frequently. Strategic health facilitators (SHFs) in learning disability services have worked with primary healthcare services for several years to enhance access for people who have a learning disability and improve their health outcomes. This article describes how SHFs in one English county worked in partnership with general practitioners (GPs) and commissioners to improve the uptake of annual health checks for people with a learning disability. The article explores the processes developed, the challenges encountered and the benefits for people who have a learning disability resulting from this work.
Consanguinity and the links to learning disabilities: the issues and pressures.

**Citation:** Learning Disability Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 22 (no. 1); p. 29-32

**Author(s):** Smith, Sophie

**Abstract:** Consanguinity is defined as the result of a sexual reproduction of two related individuals, but may also reference populations that share a common ancestor or communities that practise endogamy. There is a higher prevalence of genetic anomalies of the offspring of consanguineous relationships. However, the habit of blaming ethnic minorities for their own genetic conditions is unhelpful and has detrimental consequences for families and their children. This article discusses some of the issues related to consanguineous unions and their link to congenital abnormalities and the perceived increase in learning disabilities and considers how genetic services for people in consanguineous unions might be improved. The article focuses mainly on the Pakistani Muslim population in northern England with reference to local research.

Inhaler and nebuliser technique for people with a learning disability.

**Citation:** Learning Disability Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 22 (no. 1); p. 33-42

**Author(s):** Clark, Samuel; Pawlyn, Jillian

**Abstract:** Healthcare professionals who support people who require an inhaler or nebuliser need to know how to use the devices, monitor and assess patients’ inhaler techniques effectively. Often, people have inadequate inhaler techniques, which can lead to poor management of their respiratory condition, increased signs and symptoms, reduced quality of life and increased use of primary/secondary care services and treatment costs. This article explains how to use inhalers and nebulisers appropriately and considers some of the challenges for children and adults with a learning disability. It also describes some devices and assessment tools, and explores assessment/review methods to help ensure people use their inhalers/nebulisers successfully.

Peer Harassment among Youths with Different Disabilities: Impact of Harassment Online, in Person, and in Mixed Online and In-Person Incidents.

**Citation:** Children & Schools; Jan 2019; vol. 41 (no. 1); p. 17-24

**Author(s):** Wells, Melissa; Mitchell, Kimberly J; Jones, Lisa M; Turner, Heather A

**Abstract:** This study examines how youths with different types of disabilities, mental health diagnoses, and special education services experience peer harassment victimization (PHV). This analysis examines how these youths experience harassment that only occurs in person, only through technology, and both in person and through technology ("mixed"). Data were collected as part of the Technology Harassment Victimization study, a U.S. telephone survey of 791 youths, ages 10 to 20. Results indicate that compared with youths not reporting peer harassment, youths diagnosed with depression were more likely to report a mixed mode form of peer harassment, youths with a physical disability were more likely to report harassment through technology, and youths with a learning disability were more likely to report in-person harassment. The type of disability, diagnosis, or special service among youths may be associated with unique vulnerabilities in terms of peer harassment experiences. School social workers and other school personnel should consider specific types of disabilities in assessing risks of PHV and in planning interventions.

**Citation:** Language, Speech & Hearing Services in Schools; Jan 2019; vol. 50 (no. 1); p. 53-70

**Author(s):** Ukrainetz, Teresa A.

**Purpose:** This preliminary study investigated an intervention procedure employing 2 types of note-taking and oral practice to improve expository reporting skills.

**Procedure:** Forty-four 4th to 6th graders with language-related learning disabilities from 9 schools were assigned to treatment or control conditions that were balanced for grade, oral language, and other features. The treatment condition received 6 30-min individual or pair sessions from the school of speech-language pathologists (SLPs). Treatment involved reducing statements from grade-level science articles into concise ideas, recording the ideas as pictographic and conventional notes, and expanding from the notes into full oral sentences that are then combined into oral reports. Participants were pretested and post-tested on taking notes from grade-level history articles and using the notes to give oral reports. Post-testing also included written reports 1 to 3 days following the oral reports.

**Results:** The treatment group showed significantly greater improvement than the control group on multiple quality features of the notes and oral reports. Quantity, holistic oral quality, and delayed written reports were not significantly better. The SLPs reported high levels of student engagement and learning of skills and content within treatment. They attributed the perceived benefits to the elements of simplicity, visuals, oral practice, repeated opportunities, and visible progress.

**Conclusion:** This study indicates potential for Sketch and Speak to improve student performance in expository reporting and gives direction for strengthening and further investigating this novel SLP treatment.

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Perceptions of nurse preceptors of students and new graduates with learning difficulties and their willingness to precept them in clinical practice (Part 2).

**Citation:** Nurse Education in Practice; Jan 2019; vol. 34; p. 210-217

**Author(s):** L'Ecuyer, Kristine M.

**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to describe the perceptions of nurse preceptors of nursing students and new graduate nurses with learning disabilities in clinical settings. Learning disabilities pose potential challenges in nursing education, especially in clinical settings when working with preceptors. Preceptors (N = 166) who attended a state-wide preceptor workshop responded to an electronic survey that assessed their perceptions. Four concepts were explored: preceptor perceived level of preparedness; preceptor perceived confidence in implementation of their role; preceptor beliefs regarding the potential of learners with learning disabilities; and preceptor agreement with provision of accommodations for learners with learning disabilities. Preceptors felt unprepared and lacked confidence in their ability to implement their role as preceptor for those with learning disabilities. Those who had exposure to learning disabilities reported feeling more prepared, however they had expectations for the learner to work hard, have strategies and accommodations in place, ask for help when needed, and take responsibility for their learning. Preceptors reported they are willing to precept nurses with learning disabilities, and they expect support for those with learning disabilities. Educational modules and support to increase preceptor preparedness and confidence should be incorporated into preceptor training. Highlights • It is unknown if clinical environments are prepared to support trainees with learning disabilities in clinical settings. • Nurse preceptors lack experience and knowledge to support those with learning disabilities in clinical settings. • Nurse preceptors are unprepared and lack confidence to work with students and new graduates with learning disabilities. • Nurse preceptors believe in the potential for success of students and new graduates with learning disabilities. • Nurse preceptors favor the use of accommodations as needed in the clinical setting. • Nurse preceptors are willing to work with students and new graduates with learning disabilities in clinical settings.
Evaluating social pedagogy in the UK: Methodological issues.

Citation: Qualitative Social Work; Jan 2019; vol. 18 (no. 1); p. 8-23
Author(s): Kirkwood, Steve; Roesch-Marsh, Autumn; Cooper, Sheila

Abstract: In recent years, various social services in the UK have piloted using social pedagogy – a broadly education-based approach to bringing about social change originating in mainland Europe – as a way of improving practice, particularly in residential childcare. Pilot evaluations of initiatives to introduce social pedagogy to children’s services have produced generally positive results, although the evidence remains modest and the studies are affected by a range of methodological limitations. In this article, we critically review existing evaluations, supplemented by insights from our experience as independent evaluators for a social pedagogy pilot for services supporting people with learning disabilities, to present an account of the challenges and opportunities of evaluating social pedagogy in the UK. We argue that some of the main challenges relate to defining social pedagogy, measuring the baseline prior to implementing social pedagogy training, understanding individual and organisational change, measuring outcomes and applying an appropriate approach for the evaluation. We conclude with recommendations for those intending to evaluate social pedagogy, and similar initiatives, in the future.

Sources Used:
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