

Best Evidence Summaries of Topics in Mental Healthcare

BEST *in* **MH** *clinical question-answering service*

Question

“In adults with learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dysphasia ADHD) what is the effect of a specific diagnosis and / or a diagnosis specific treatment plan, when compared to no treatment or general mental health services in achieving improved patient outcomes?”

Clarification of question using PICO structure

Patients: In adults with learning difficulties
Intervention: Specific diagnosis and / or a diagnosis specific treatment plan
Comparator: No treatment or general mental health services
Outcome: Any patient outcomes

Clinical and research implications

No directly relevant studies were found to answer this question.

What does the evidence say?

Number of included studies/reviews (number of participants)

No directly relevant studies were identified.

Main Findings

N/a

Authors Conclusions

N/a

Reliability of conclusions/Strength of evidence

N/a

What do guidelines say?

The clinical guidelines relevant to this question are broadly consistent with the searches carried out, in that no randomised controlled trial or systematic review evidence addresses this subject. Other evidence may exist that does not meet the inclusion criteria for this summary.

With regards to Autism (1);

“Some people manage to proceed through adolescence without receiving a diagnosis because their families ‘cushion’ them by doing everything for them or tolerating their idiosyncrasies, and the person only starts to experience difficulties at the transition to independence (for example, going to university or moving away from their family) where they may not be able to make friends, becoming depressed and isolated. They may, therefore, only seek a diagnosis in their late teens or early twenties. Others may not seek a diagnosis until mid life following a series of failed relationships, including marriage(s), and failed jobs.

A study by the UK National Autistic Society (NAS) found that 88% of adults without a learning disability on the autism spectrum are unemployed despite having skills that mean they could be working, although many might require supported or sheltered employment (Barnard *et al.*, 2001).

With regard to ADHD (2);

“Young and colleagues’ (2008a) qualitative research into the impact of receiving a diagnosis of ADHD in adulthood revealed a six-stage model of psychological acceptance of the diagnosis:

- relief and elation
- confusion and emotional turmoil
- anger
- sadness and grief
- anxiety

- accommodation and acceptance.

The study asked participants to review the past, to discuss the emotional impact of the diagnosis and to give consideration to the future. Partners of people with ADHD expressed a sense of inadequacy; they identified the emotional impact of the diagnosis on both them and their affected partner.” (pp. 67)

“Participants expressed an initial sense of relief at the diagnosis, finally learning that there was an external cause and explanation for their behaviour. This also gave them a sense of optimism for the future. This initial elation was quickly followed by a sense of turmoil and anger that they could have been helped earlier. Some expressed sadness at the past wasted years and felt that their life experiences could have been more positive and more successful with an earlier diagnosis. The next stage of the process was an adjustment to living with a chronic condition and the potential negative impact on their future lives. Ultimately this adjustment led to acceptance of ADHD as part of their lives and of who they are. Partners also described the emotional impact of the diagnosis and their own need to come to terms with its implications. They stated that they felt emotionally ill equipped to provide appropriate support and to cope with the situation. Having the diagnosis, however, allowed partners a framework in which to better understand the person with ADHD, shifting their perspective from the patient ‘being’ the problem to them ‘having’ a problem. Partners identified an initial increase in self-esteem in the people with ADHD following the diagnosis. Partners also described a process leading towards acceptance of the diagnosis and the status of the person with ADHD.” (pp. 68)

“The study by Young and colleagues (2008a) indicates that adults receiving a diagnosis of ADHD tend to engage in a psychological process that involves a review of the past, an emotional journey towards acceptance of the diagnosis and a consideration of a future with ADHD. The lack of a diagnosis in childhood seems to have led to an internalisation of blame for their behaviours and a negative impact on their hopes for the future. In the long term, this may increase the risk of depression and low self-esteem.

The research by Young and colleagues (2008a) reveals a need for psychological treatment (in particular cognitive behavioural techniques) for adults diagnosed with ADHD, and their partners, at the point of diagnosis to help them cope with the adjustment process. Psychological therapy can also have a role in helping adults diagnosed with ADHD to reframe their experiences through an encouragement to learn from the past. Anxiety about the future could be alleviated by emphasising the positive aspects of the disorder and/or the individual’s particular strengths, and to capitalise on them. Adults with a diagnosis of ADHD should be taught skills to help them anticipate future hurdles and challenges and to apply appropriate coping strategies.” (pp.69)

Date searches conducted: 01/11/2012

Date answer completed: 06/11/2012

References

1. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2012) Autism. Recognition, referral, diagnosis and management of adults on the autism spectrum. CG 142. London: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/13774/59684/59684.pdf>
2. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2009) Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Diagnosis and management of ADHD in children, young people and adults. CG 72. London:

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

<http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12061/42060/42060.pdf>

Search Details

Source	Search Strategy	Number of hits	Relevant evidence identified
<i>SRs and Guidelines</i>			
NICE	"learning disabilities" AND "Adults" AND "diagnosis"		
DARE	1 (psych* adj5 (assess* OR diagnos*)) IN DARE 401 2 ((learning OR intellect* OR mental*) adj5 (difficult* OR disabilit* OR disable OR handicap* OR retard*OR incapacit* OR deficien* OR disorder*)) IN DARE 530 3 (dyslexia OR dysphasia OR aphasia OR dyscalculia OR dysgraphia OR ADHD OR (attention adj2 deficit) IN DARE 141 4 MeSH DESCRIPTOR Dyslexia EXPLODE ALL TREES 3 5 MeSH DESCRIPTOR Dyslexia, Acquired EXPLODE ALL TREES 1 6 #2 OR #3 OR #4 OR #5 635 7 #1 AND #6 113	113	0
<i>Primary studies</i>			
CENTRAL	#1 dyslexia:ti,ab,kw (239 #2 search "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder""attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" 1269 #3 search autismautism 694 #4 search learning disabilitieslearning disabilities 1128 #5 search aspergerasperger 82 #6 MeSH descriptor: [Learning Disorders] explode all trees 413 #7 searc#1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #63239 #8 searcpsychological near diagnosis733	73	0

	<p>#9 searchpsychological near assessment651 #10 searchbehavioural near assessment543 #11 searchformulation near psychological8 #12 search#8 or #9 or #10 or #111858 #13 searchno adj diagnosis1157 #14 searchundiagnosed389 #15 searchwithout adj diagnos*1216 #16 searchnot adj diagnosed18624 #17 search#13 or #14 or #15 or #1620168 #18 search#7 and #12 and #1773</p>		
PsycINFO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PsycINFO; (learning adj3 disabilit*).ti,ab; 13494 results. 2. PsycINFO; (learning adj3 disable*).ti,ab; 6891 results. 3. PsycINFO; (learning adj3 difficult*).ti,ab; 4739 results. 4. PsycINFO; (learning adj3 handicap*).ti,ab; 430 results. 5. PsycINFO; (intellect* adj3 disabilit*).ti,ab; 7116 results. 6. PsycINFO; (intellect* adj3 disable*).ti,ab; 388 results. 7. PsycINFO; (intellect* adj3 impair*).ti,ab; 1253 results. 8. PsycINFO; (cognitive* adj3 impair*).ti,ab; 21037 results. 9. PsycINFO; (mental* adj3 incapacit*).ti,ab; 188 results. 10. PsycINFO; (mental* adj3 deficien*).ti,ab; 2857 results. 11. PsycINFO; "down* syndrome".ti,ab; 5398 results. 12. PsycINFO; (fragile adj3 syndrome).ti,ab; 1141 results. 13. PsycINFO; (mental* adj3 retard*).ti,ab; 23998 results. 14. PsycINFO; (autism OR autistic).ti,ab; 25299 results. 15. PsycINFO; asperger*.ti,ab; 2570 results. 16. PsycINFO; dyslexia.ti,ab; 4842 results. 17. PsycINFO; dysphasia.ti,ab; 453 results. 18. PsycINFO; (ADHD OR "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder").ti,ab; 17398 results. 19. PsycINFO; 1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4 OR 5 OR 6 OR 7 OR 8 OR 9 OR 10 OR 11 OR 12 OR 13 OR 14 OR 15 OR 16 OR 17 OR 18; 122554 results. 20. PsycINFO; (behavi* adj2 (assess* OR diagnos*)).ti,ab; 11481 results. 21. PsycINFO; (psycholog* adj2 (assess* OR diagnos* OR formulat*)).ti,ab; 7119 results. 22. PsycINFO; "no diagnosis".ti,ab; 331 results. 	225	0

	<p>23. PsycINFO; (without adj4 diagnos*).ti,ab; 1932 results.</p> <p>24. PsycINFO; (not adj2 diagnosed).ti,ab; 40611 results.</p> <p>25. PsycINFO; undiagnosed.ti,ab; 1162 results.</p> <p>26. PsycINFO; 20 OR 21; 18421 results.</p> <p>27. PsycINFO; 22 OR 23 OR 24 OR 25; 43090 results.</p> <p>28. PsycINFO; 19 AND 26 AND 27; 225 results.</p>		
EMBASE	<p>29. EMBASE; (learning adj3 disabilit*).ti,ab; 7196 results.</p> <p>31. EMBASE; (learning adj3 difficult*).ti,ab; 3052 results.</p> <p>30. EMBASE; (learning adj3 disable*).ti,ab; 1374 results.</p> <p>32. EMBASE; (learning adj3 handicap*).ti,ab; 108 results.</p> <p>34. EMBASE; (intellect* adj3 disable*).ti,ab; 377 results.</p> <p>35. EMBASE; (intellect* adj3 impair*).ti,ab; 1780 results.</p> <p>33. EMBASE; (intellect* adj3 disabilit*).ti,ab; 6958 results.</p> <p>36. EMBASE; (cognitive* adj3 impair*).ti,ab; 42312 results.</p> <p>38. EMBASE; (mental* adj3 deficien*).ti,ab; 1998 results.</p> <p>39. EMBASE; "down* syndrome".ti,ab; 18720 results.</p> <p>40. EMBASE; (fragile adj3 syndrome).ti,ab; 3588 results.</p> <p>41. EMBASE; (mental* adj3 retard*).ti,ab; 33808 results.</p> <p>42. EMBASE; (autism OR autistic).ti,ab; 23996 results.</p> <p>37. EMBASE; (mental* adj3 incapacit*).ti,ab; 272 results.</p> <p>44. EMBASE; dyslexia.ti,ab; 3956 results.</p> <p>43. EMBASE; asperger*.ti,ab; 1929 results.</p> <p>46. EMBASE; (ADHD OR "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder").ti,ab; 19612 results.</p> <p>45. EMBASE; dysphasia.ti,ab; 1299 results.</p> <p>47. EMBASE; 29 OR 30 OR 31 OR 32 OR 33 OR 34 OR 35 OR 36 OR 37 OR 38 OR 39 OR 40 OR 41 OR 42 OR 43 OR 44 OR 45 OR 46; 156032 results.</p> <p>48. EMBASE; (behavi* adj2 (assess* OR diagnos*)).ti,ab; 11167 results.</p> <p>49. EMBASE; (psycholog* adj2 (assess* OR diagnos* OR formulat*)).ti,ab; 4689 results.</p> <p>50. EMBASE; "no diagnosis".ti,ab; 1181 results.</p> <p>51. EMBASE; (without adj4 diagnos*).ti,ab; 14708 results.</p> <p>52. EMBASE; (not adj2 diagnosed).ti,ab; 408232 results.</p> <p>53. EMBASE; undiagnosed.ti,ab; 13364 results.</p> <p>54. EMBASE; 48 OR 49; 15789 results.</p>	166	0

	55. EMBASE; 50 OR 51 OR 52 OR 53; 428803 results. 56. EMBASE; 47 AND 54 AND 55; 166 results.		
MEDLINE	57. MEDLINE; (learning adj3 disabilit*).ti,ab; 5776 results. 58. MEDLINE; (learning adj3 disable*).ti,ab; 1339 results. 59. MEDLINE; (learning adj3 difficult*).ti,ab; 2251 results. 61. MEDLINE; (intellect* adj3 disabilit*).ti,ab; 4934 results. 62. MEDLINE; (intellect* adj3 disable*).ti,ab; 284 results. 60. MEDLINE; (learning adj3 handicap*).ti,ab; 92 results. 64. MEDLINE; (cognitive* adj3 impair*).ti,ab; 30981 results. 63. MEDLINE; (intellect* adj3 impair*).ti,ab; 1443 results. 66. MEDLINE; (mental* adj3 deficien*).ti,ab; 1937 results. 67. MEDLINE; "down* syndrome".ti,ab; 16330 results. 68. MEDLINE; (fragile adj3 syndrome).ti,ab; 3085 results. 65. MEDLINE; (mental* adj3 incapacit*).ti,ab; 206 results. 69. MEDLINE; (mental* adj3 retard*).ti,ab; 29355 results. 70. MEDLINE; (autism OR autistic).ti,ab; 19320 results. 71. MEDLINE; asperger*.ti,ab; 1477 results. 72. MEDLINE; dyslexia.ti,ab; 3374 results. 73. MEDLINE; dysphasia.ti,ab; 897 results. 74. MEDLINE; (ADHD OR "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder").ti,ab; 15055 results. 75. MEDLINE; 57 OR 58 OR 59 OR 60 OR 61 OR 62 OR 63 OR 64 OR 65 OR 66 OR 67 OR 68 OR 69 OR 70 OR 71 OR 72 OR 73 OR 74; 125385 results. 76. MEDLINE; (behavi* adj2 (assess* OR diagnos*)).ti,ab; 9068 results. 77. MEDLINE; (psycholog* adj2 (assess* OR diagnos* OR formulat*)).ti,ab; 3541 results. 78. MEDLINE; "no diagnosis".ti,ab; 843 results. 79. MEDLINE; (without adj4 diagnos*).ti,ab; 10912 results. 80. MEDLINE; (not adj2 diagnosed).ti,ab; 305795 results. 81. MEDLINE; undiagnosed.ti,ab; 10504 results. 82. MEDLINE; 76 OR 77; 12564 results. 83. MEDLINE; 78 OR 79 OR 80 OR 81; 321825 results. 84. MEDLINE; 75 AND 82 AND 83; 115 results.	115	0
Summary	NA	NA	0

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