



Photographs courtesy of NIISQ

According to the recent systematic review conducted in the Netherlands (see right), failure to return to work after ABI is a major public health issue. At least 75% of people with ABI are of working age, yet successful return to work varies between 11 and 85%. Only 40% of those with ABI under 65 years of age who were previously employed are likely to return to work within two years.

However, work remains an important element of life for people with ABI. Work provides a social environment, a sense of purpose, a source of satisfaction and self-esteem and motivation for recovery.

It is important that people with ABI are supported to return to work and set strong vocational goals. However, the focus of rehabilitation is, by necessity, on functional recovery.

Uncertainty exists around the best way to support people to set realistic vocational goals early in their rehabilitation process. Even once people leave rehabilitation centres, there is limited evidence about which vocational interventions are most successful. The purpose of this systematic review was to identify the most effective components of vocational rehabilitation.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

Effective return-to-work interventions after acquired brain injury: A systematic review

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The review involved a search of five major databases (PubMed, EMBASE, PsycINFO, CINAHL and the Cochrane Library using keywords and Medical Subject headings). Studies were included if they focused on adults with non-progressive ABI, who were working prior to their injuries and received an intervention designed to improve return-to-work. Only twelve studies met these criteria; five randomized controlled trials and seven cohort studies. Nine of the studies had sufficient methodological quality to be included.

The review found strong evidence that work-directed interventions in combination with education and coaching were effective in promoting return to work for this group of participants. Components of the most effective interventions included:

- Early intervention
- A tailored individualised approach
- Active involvement of both client and employer
- Work or workplace accommodations
- Training and practice of social and work-related skills
- Coping and emotional support

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Images above (Left to Right): Hopkins Ambassador Dr Michelle Owens and husband Nick Owens; Hopkins Ambassador, Tim McCallum with the team, Shane Daley's award-winning photograph Kintsugi, Hopkins Ambassador Stephen Dale, and NIISQ Participant, Izak and his NIISQ planner

Other information on vocational rehabilitation:

www.apo.org.au/system/files/53304/apo-nid53304-82566.pdf

http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/media/k2/attachments/Graham_Employment_Interventions_Review.pdf

Check out our website www.hopkinscentre.edu.au



Useful resources