**A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES**

**ABSTRACT**

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**Objectives:** Youth with disabilities are less likely to attend higher education, to stay enrolled, and to secure meaningful employment. Consequently, their educational and employment pathways may be disrupted which can have devastating long-term impacts on their career and income. The objective of this systematic review was to understand the best practices and effective components of post-secondary transition interventions for youth with disabilities.

**Methods:** Systematic searches in six international databases were conducted. Articles needed to meet the following inclusion criteria: (1) at least 50% of the sample has a disability, defined as an impairment in body structure and function; (2) included participants who are between 15-30 years of age; (3) an empirical study reporting on a post-secondary education preparation program or intervention; (4) published in English, from 1997-September 2017 in a peer-reviewed journal. Studies included in the review were analyzed with respect to the participant characteristics, methodology, results, and quality of the evidence. The analysis involved a structured synopsis of the main findings and patterns observed across the studies.

**Results:** Of 1597 articles found in our search, 18 met the inclusion criteria for this review. These 18 studies were conducted across three countries and represented 2385 participants (aged 13-28, mean 17.7 years). The overall assessment of the rigor of the studies and quality assessment revealed that post-secondary transition interventions are possibly effective. Although the outcomes of the interventions varied across the studies, all of them reported an improvement in at least one of the following: college enrollment, self-determination, self-confidence, social and vocational self-efficacy, autonomy, social support, career exploration, and transition skills. The interventions varied in duration, number of sessions, and delivery format which included curriculum-based, online, immersive residential experience, mentoring, simulation, self-directed, technology-based and multi-component.

**Discussion/Conclusions**: The findings highlight that post-secondary education interventions can have a beneficial influence on post-secondary and related transition outcomes in youth with disabilities. Notably, the majority of the studies in this review included higher proportions of people with cognitive disabilities (e.g., intellectual and learning disabilities) than other types of disabilities (e.g., sensory impairments). Thus, the positive influence of interventions on post-secondary and related transition skills may be more pronounced in youth with cognitive disabilities than other types of disabilities. Research shows that although youth with disabilities generally have poor transition outcomes, those with cognitive disabilities are more severely affected. Clinicians and educators should consider having multiple components, involving several sessions that include a curriculum, immersive college residential experience, mentoring and/or simulations in their interventions for optimum effectiveness.

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