

TITLE: Cognitive Training and its Role in Vocational Rehabilitation for Individuals with Multiple Sclerosis

AUTHOR(S): Robert Fruin, Winston Kennedy

PRESENTER(S): Robert Fruin, Winston Kennedy

STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: This topic is about increasing success rates in vocational rehabilitation for people with multiple sclerosis through advocacy for the inclusion of more cognitive rehabilitative intervention options. Target audiences are healthcare professionals and the Oregon Department of Human Services.

ABSTRACT: Background: Individuals with multiple sclerosis (MS) face a plethora of symptoms that affect them physically and cognitively. One major implication with a diagnosis of MS is the ability to remain in the workforce; 80% of individuals diagnosed with MS are out of work within ten years, and 58% are unemployed. To combat this, vocational rehabilitation has been utilized by individuals with MS but with limited success. This may be due to the lack of interventions that address cognitive symptoms that occur. Purpose: The purpose of this review is to examine the components of vocational rehabilitation (VR) and propose additional interventions that could potentially increase the success of individuals with MS obtaining work. Implications: Approximately 60% of individuals receiving these services from state VR agencies obtain or retain employment compared to 48.1% of clients with MS who were able to obtain jobs after receiving VR services. This disparity highlights a disconnect in VR services. It has been seen that individuals with MS who were employed at application were more likely to receive services that include cognitive retraining-type services. Including more opportunities for cognitive retraining-type services may decrease this disparity and help more individuals with MS maintain or obtain work.

OBJECTIVE(S): Assess current vocational rehabilitation programs for people with multiple sclerosis Discuss different cognitive training/rehabilitation interventions
