

Individual placement and support for people unemployed with chronic pain (virtual)

Invited Lectures

Faculty:

Karen Walker-Bone

Individual placement and support (IPS) is a model of vocational rehabilitation developed for people with severe psychiatric conditions. Relying upon a “place then train” rather than train then place model, it relies on putting the opportunity to work at the heart of recovery from, and treatment of, the long-term health condition. Amongst people with severe psychiatric conditions, with traditional levels of unemployment as high as 90%, it has been shown to reduce unemployment levels to nearer 50%.

Aims: To evaluate the role of IPS in reducing unemployment amongst people with chronic pain.

Methods: Mixed-methods research with stakeholders was carried out, including a pilot trial recruiting patients unemployed with chronic pain from primary care.

Results: Although 50 participants were recruited successfully, and the intervention showed promise amongst those in the active IPS arm, a number of methodological barriers were identified. Together, these barriers led to a conclusion that a future definitive randomised controlled trial of IPS for people unemployed with chronic pain in the UK recruiting through primary care was not feasible. However, the results of other contemporary studies amongst people with chronic pain will also be presented for comparison.

Conclusion: IPS is a model of vocational rehabilitation that could have great utility amongst people with chronic pain who wish to work. There are challenges to the recruitment of these individuals to a trial which will be considered and discussed.

About Our Speaker:

Karen Walker-Bone

Karen trained as a Specialist in Rheumatology. Her PhD about neck /upper limb disorders in working-aged adults sparked a lifetime passion for health and work research. She migrated to Australia in December 2021 to become a Professor of Occupational Rheumatology and Director of the Monash Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health in the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (SPHPM) at Monash University. She remains co-Director of the MRC Versus Arthritis Centre for Musculoskeletal Health and Work. Her interests include: promoting musculoskeletal health for older workers, enabling work for people with long-term health conditions and reducing work disability.

