

The Papworth Early Rehabilitation Programme: long term vocational outcomes

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Introduction

There are 2.7 million people in the UK receiving incapacity benefits, costing approximately £18 billion pa. The government has adopted a policy of helping claimants back into work, through structured vocational rehabilitation schemes, but no results of UK providers have been published.

The Papworth Trust "Early Rehab Programme" was established in 1995 to get people on incapacity benefits:

- a) into employment, b) fit for and seeking work c) involved in voluntary work, d) into education or (for the most dependent clients) e) able to live independently.

Methods

Retrospective chart survey and telephone follow up a median 48 months after finishing the programme. All participants from 1995 - 2004 were included.

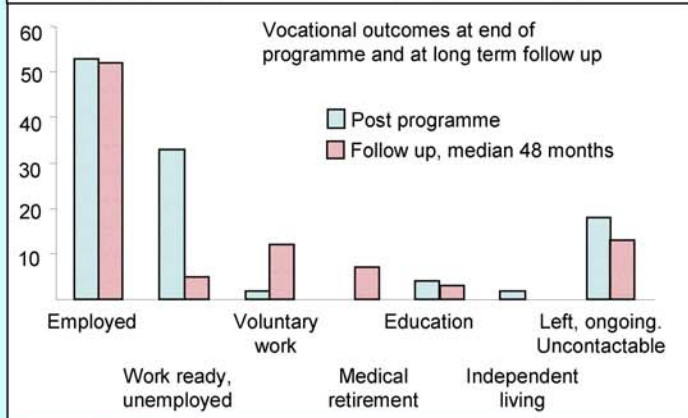
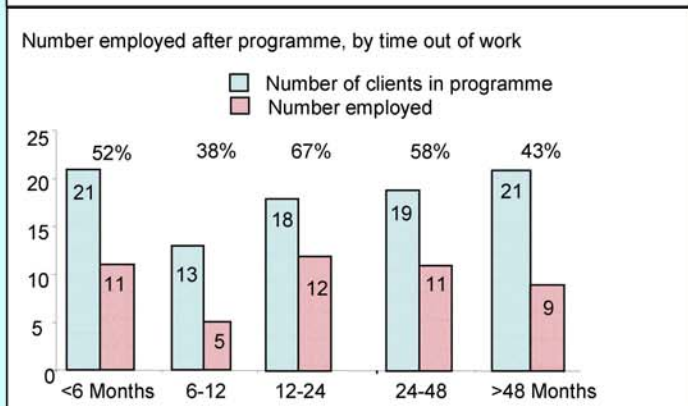
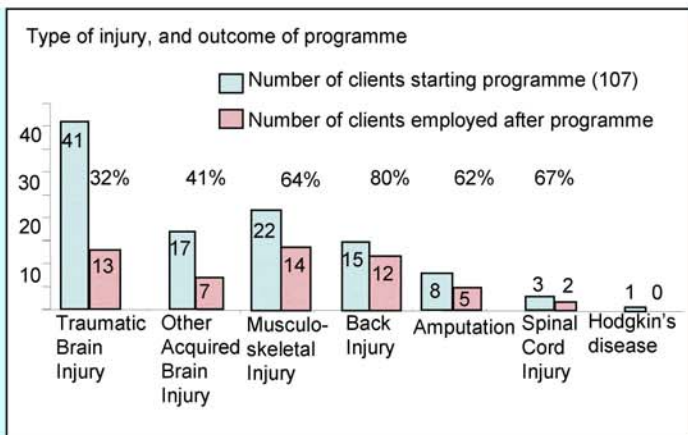
Results

274 people attended for a preliminary interview: 78 clients did not attend further sessions or chose to leave, 63 were felt to be more appropriately managed elsewhere and lack of funding prevented 20 suitable clients joining the programme.

107 subsequently started a full rehab programme. 87 were male and 20 female. Half had been unemployed for more than two years.

94 have completed the programme, of whom 53 gained employment, 33 were "work ready" and 4 were doing voluntary work. 11 left before completion.

At long term follow up, 52 were employed, 12 were in voluntary work, and 7 had retired on medical grounds.



Conclusions

91% of clients who completed the programme found or were looking for employment. 98% who found employment, kept it in the long term. This programme demonstrates that long term Incapacity Benefit recipients can return to sustained employment, and hence reduce their dependency on benefits, given appropriate treatment. This suggests that the poor prognosis in many reports is due to lack of access to effective vocational rehabilitation services.