
Abstract

A study focused on the English literature regarding psychotherapy for adults with intellectual disabilities

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We performed a systematic and comprehensive review on overseas trends in practical research regarding psychotherapy for adults with intellectual disabilities. With the objective of clarifying challenges targeting psychotherapy, techniques of psychotherapy, and their relations, we studied English papers using a method of systematic review. From 1,182 academic papers identified by a literature search, we selected 53 papers. Diverse techniques (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, and mindfulness) are being used to treat various issues (e.g., aggression, anxiety, and relationship difficulties), where a characteristic relationship was not confirmed. In the past, some form of specificity was assumed for psychotherapy for adults with intellectual disabilities without a clear basis; thus, there was a tendency to avoid the use of psychotherapy. As such, nonspecific efforts indicated in this study can be considered as progress in the field. Going forward, more detailed examinations might clarify the nonspecificity of psychological issues and psychotherapy techniques, which could lead to a rebuilding of the construct referred to as intellectual disability.

Keywords: intellectual disability, adults, psychotherapy, systematic review
