

## **Systematic Review of Health Self-Management Interventions for Adults with Developmental Disabilities**

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**Introduction:** While developmental disorders are a health condition, persons with developmental disorders are not "sick." Unfortunately, adults with developmental disorders demonstrate significant health disparities, with higher rates of morbidity and mortality compared to the general adult population.

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to answer the question, "what is the effectiveness of health self-management interventions for adults with developmental disabilities?"

**Methods:** Investigators searched the MEDLINE and CINHALL database for intervention studies published between January 2007 and January 2017. To be included in this systematic review, studies were required to be intervention studies that include adults (or persons transitioning to adulthood) diagnosed with a developmental disability. Qualitative synthesis was used for between-study comparisons.

**Results:** Thirty-nine studies were included in this review. Intervention methods identified in the literature included peer support, cognitive behavioral therapy, supportive living, advocacy, education, physical activity, nutrition, skills training, and health promotion. Interventionists mostly targeted obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. The research represented an international sample of adults with developmental disabilities but over represented developed nations.

**Conclusion:** With intervention, adults with developmental disabilities can improve their ability to manage their health and subsequently live healthy productive lives. More research is needed that explores the full complement of health behaviors and health conditions commonly experienced by adults with developmental disabilities. Occupational therapy researchers can use their expertise in health self-management occupations to develop new interventions to meet the health needs of adults with developmental disabilities, their families, and health care providers.