

Chaplin, E., Tsakanikos, E. Wright, S. & Bouras, N. (2009). Clinical psychopathology, untoward incidents and the use of restrictive procedures in adults with intellectual disability. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 22, 169-178.

The use of restraint within clinical settings that treat individuals with intellectual disability (ID) is an area that has not been researched extensively. The aim of this study was to firstly explore the range of incidents which occurred in a given service setting as well as the implemented interventions, and secondly to examine the relationship between specific types of untoward incidents, the corresponding interventions, and the patient's clinical psychopathology. This study defined an untoward incident as an unexpected event that could lead to harm of the patient (or other patients), and would be of public concern. This study utilized both case files and database information on 65 service users admitted into a unit of a psychiatric hospital that provides assessment and treatment packages for individuals with ID and mental health problems.

Key Findings:

Overall Group Findings

1. Over half of all patients had been involved in an untoward incident. However, a small proportion of individuals (8%) accounted for 43% of incidents.
2. Male patients were more frequently involved in untoward incidents, specifically incidents involving physical assault and verbal abuse.
3. No significant association was found between age and number of incidents, having a psychiatric diagnosis and being involved in incidents or severity ratings between different incident types.
4. Incidents aimed at staff were most frequent.

Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis Group Findings

1. An association was found between number of recorded incidents and autistic spectrum diagnosis, with higher numbers of incidents being reported in this population.
2. Presence of autism was associated with incidents of damage to property, physical abuse, verbal abuse, incidents aimed at staff and at non-specific, and with transfer from unit or discharge as the intervention used.

Intervention Findings

1. De-escalation and restraint and medication were the most frequently used interventions.
2. De-escalation was associated with verbal abuse, theft and other inappropriate behaviors. Physical restraint was associated with physical assault and with incidents involving weapons. Formal observation was associated with self-injurious behavior. Outside help was associated with absconding.

This study was able to explore the types of interventions being used in differing incidents, as well as the clinical population involved in the incidents. It was demonstrated that restrictive interventions were mainly being used in potentially dangerous situations

and less restrictive interventions were also being employed in response to serious incidents. Another important finding was that group differences in untoward incidents were seen in patients with autism in comparison to the entire sample.