

**Hassiotis, A., Robotham, D., Canagasabey, A., Romeo, R., Langridge, D., Blizard, R., Murad, S., & M. King. (2009). Randomized, single-blind, controlled trial of a specialist behaviour therapy team for challenging behaviour in adults with intellectual disabilities. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 166; 1278-1285.**

This study examined how effective and costly treatment by a specialist behaviour therapy team is in managing challenging behaviour in a community-based setting.

### **Methods:**

The researchers employed a parallel-group, randomized, single-blind controlled design. Subjects were 63 adults with mild to severe intellectual disability presenting challenging behaviour and registered with community intellectual disability services in Greater London, England. The researchers compared subjects in two conditions: standard treatment only (N=31) and standard treatment as well as behaviour therapy support by a specialist team (N=32).

The behaviour therapy team included one coordinator, five behaviour specialists, two behaviour associate practitioners, and one administrator. The behaviour specialists coordinated the plans for behavioural intervention, the behaviour associate practitioners worked with each individual and the caregivers, they helped to implement the intervention plans, using a positive behaviour supports model. Challenging behaviour was measured by caregiver ratings 3 months and 6 months after intervention was initiated

### **Key Findings:**

There were significant differences in the total scores on the Aberrant Behaviour Checklist (difference=-0.89, 95% CI=-1.74 to -0.04) and lethargy and hyperactivity subscale scores (common intervention effect=-.056, 95% CI=-0.97 to -0.15) post treatment. Standard care participants fared worse on the PAS-ADD comorbid organic disorder subscale as well. There was also a trend for lower costs of the behavior therapy team intervention

### **Conclusions:**

A specialist behaviour therapy team as an adjunct to standard treatment is more effective in improving challenging behaviour and may have financial advantages over standard treatment alone.