

Preface

Care, education and rehabilitation have a long tradition in the lands of Bohemia and Moravia, parts of the present Czech Republic. Current development has been substantially influenced by it. Significant changes in Czech special education were made possible by the change of political system in 1989. This date initiated a new period of development. Twenty-five years of development have shown that the level of the Czech system of social and rehabilitation services for adults with visual impairment is in many areas comparable with other developed countries. In a few selected areas, however, it is necessary to continue to work on development and to achieve global standards of rehabilitation. One of these areas is rehabilitation of individuals with low vision.

The need to review the current state of knowledge is suggested and evidenced by a number of important Czech authors (e.g. Jesenský, Moravcová, Růžicková, Skalická, Vítková). The author uses in her work numerous foreign professional works which highlight the need for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary-conceived rehabilitation intervention focused on the special needs of adults (e.g. Lueck, Silvestrone, Lang, Rosenthal, Faye et al.).

The publication answers a number of questions concerning functional impact of vision rehabilitation on the increase of functional visual performance of adults with low vision. The results of the research confirmed the high importance of the experimental rehabilitation programme in all its components (reading rate, reading accuracy and reading comprehension) as well as in the monitored intervening variables (visual acuity, age, level of reading experience and activity).

Implemented interventions represented a significant potential for the solution of one of the most acute areas of rehabilitation objectives: they significantly affected the quality of life of the research group. Based on the achieved data, the author proposes areas and means for a modernization of the programme of vision rehabilitation which represent a potential for increase in the quality and effectiveness of the programme.

The publication is intended for professionals, especially special teachers or education assistants, social and rehabilitation workers. The author hopes that it will become a stimulus for professional discussions and an improvement of rehabilitation services for persons with low vision.

Recommendation

The need for further development of special education and rehabilitation of individuals with low vision was stressed as the pivotal conclusion of 2001 international conference 'Edukace a rehabilitace zrakově postižených na prahu nového milénia' (*Education and Rehabilitation of Persons with Low Vision at the Threshold of the New Millennium*) in the Czech Republic.

The topic of development of a rehabilitation programme for individuals with low vision was recommended by the Czech prominent specialist Prof. Ján Jesenský, CSc. (Charles University in Prague). The interdisciplinary research study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University Hospital in Hradec Kralove. Both the University of Hradec Králové and Rehabilitation Centre for Individuals with Visual Impairment in the Czech Republic participated in the research.

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Research and Practice in the Czech Republic

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