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Original Abstract:
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Topic: Quality of Life, Individualised Funding, Relationships, Social Inclusion

Title: Measuring the outcomes of inclusion: the results of two trials of new research methods

Background: With the move to a policy and practice focus on inclusion, there is the need to develop accessible and practical methods to determine whether or not services providers are making a difference. This paper builds on the paper by Dr Erin Wilson, at last year’s conference, that presented a new way of conceptualising outcomes for individuals, with a focus on their experiences across all of their life domains. This approach affirms that individuals have a wide variety of aspirations and goals, and service providers and government need to ensure that their programs support the breadth of these aspirations.

Method: Two data collection instruments have been developed and trialed within Scope (Victoria), a major disability organisation. One has been trialed in two service settings with children and families, the other trialed with adults accessing a community-based day service. Both instruments aim to assess the level of a range of outcomes for individuals (and families). In particular, the second instrument has attempted to create a mechanism for adults to self report about their personal plans and outcomes against these, whilst the first instrument identifies impacts across a range of life domains. Data has been collected from both trials throughout 2007 and 2008.

Results: Findings from both trials will be presented to the conference. Results will focus on the extent to which individuals have achieved their goals and the impact of services across life domains. In addition results will also include analysis of barriers and enablers to outcomes. Finally, presenters will discuss the level of utility of the data collection instruments, and the ethical and methodological issues related to them.

Implications: There are few data collection instruments in disability research that focus on outcome measurement around inclusion, especially in terms of the impact on an individual's whole of life experience. In addition, few enable self-report about what is important to them. The research instruments and approach discussed offer approaches for use in other sites and services. The ethical and methodological issues outlined in this presentation will form the basis of a valuable dialogue with others.