

Seeking strategies to support paramedic students with dyslexia in the clinical setting: a collaborative study.

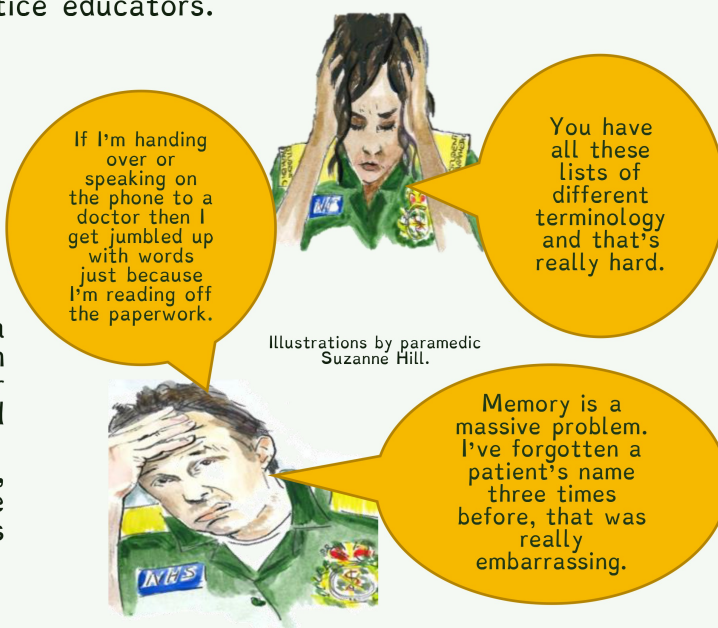
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It is estimated that 10% of the general population have dyslexia, a learning difficulty that affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent reading and spelling with co-occurring difficulties potentially in co-ordination, concentration, and personal organisation.¹ Identifying supportive measures to support these difficulties is particularly important for paramedic students, as the complexity and uncertainty of the pre-hospital setting creates a diverse, often challenging learning environment.


With little in the literature seeking to understand the impact of dyslexia on clinical placements, this study set out to ascertain if there are components that are commonly challenging and identify supportive coping strategies. In collaboration with students, a guidance leaflet was created that provides a simple, structured framework to educate and guide the conversation about their dyslexic identity, that is freely available to students and practice educators.

Methods. Qualitative exploratory methods were used to gather paramedic students' perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 students. Focus groups and one-to-one interviews were used for data collection, and a thematic analysis was conducted.

Findings. 3 key themes were identified: there was a wide variety of ways to manage challenges in practice, the need for more time (to compensate for literacy deficits and organizational challenges), and the importance of an inclusive learning approach. All participants found their educators supportive, despite initial unease around choosing to disclose their dyslexic identity. They found clinical placements to be an approachable and accepting environment.



Recommendations to support a dyslexia friendly placement

 Discuss concerns with students at the beginning of placement to ascertain if there are any components they struggle with.


 Provide extra time to write up the Patient Report Form, especially if it's been a complex case.

 Allow extra time to read information

 Be explicit with instructions

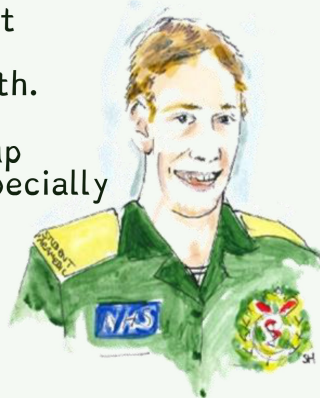
Debrief after each patient 

Be non-judgemental if mistakes are made.

Use pictures, diagrams & mind maps to help with explanations. 


Practice medical terminology with students

Read the local Additional Learning Needs Procedure to know what reasonable adjustments can be made in the clinical environment.



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Dyslexia guidance leaflet code

 #cardiaed

¹ British Dyslexia Association, n.d. What is dyslexia? [online] bdadyslexia.org.uk Available at: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/about-dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia> [Accessed 13 January 2021].