

## Decision on your manuscript #JOOR-D-15-00116

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From: Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation (JOOR) (em@editorialmanager.com)

To: flfglangi@yahoo.com

Date: Friday, October 23, 2015 at 04:16 AM GMT+8

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Dear Mr. Langi,

We have received the reviews on your manuscript, "Vocational Rehabilitation of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities: A Propensity-Score Matched Study", which you submitted to Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation.

Based on the advice received, I have decided that your manuscript could be reconsidered for publication should you be prepared to satisfactorily incorporate major revisions. When preparing your revised manuscript, you are asked to carefully consider the reviewer comments which are below, and submit a list of responses in numerical order to each of these comments.

The reviewer's comments can be found at the end of this email or can be accessed by following the provided link at the end.

If you choose not to incorporate a reviewer suggestion, please indicate the rationale in your response. Your list of responses should be uploaded as a file in addition to your revised manuscript.

In order to submit your revised manuscript electronically, please access the following web site:

<http://joor.edmgr.com/>

Your username is: flangi2

Your password is: available at this link [http://joor.edmgr.com/Default.aspx?pg=accountFinder.aspx&firstname=F.+L.+Fredrik+G.&lastname=Langi&email\\_address=flangi2@uic.edu;flfglangi@yahoo.com](http://joor.edmgr.com/Default.aspx?pg=accountFinder.aspx&firstname=F.+L.+Fredrik+G.&lastname=Langi&email_address=flangi2@uic.edu;flfglangi@yahoo.com)

Please click "Author Login" to submit your revision.

Please make sure to submit your editable source files (i. e. Word, TeX).

I would like to receive your revisions by Nov 21, 2015.

In addition, please make sure that your manuscript uses the Vancouver style of referencing.

Ex. You CH, Lee KY, Chey RY, Menguy R.

Electrogastrographic study of patients with  
unexplained nausea, bloating and vomiting.  
Gastroenterology 1980; 79:311-314

If you have any questions on this review or concerning the revision time, please send an email to [pfindley@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:pfindley@rci.rutgers.edu).

Best regards,  
Michael Feuerstein, Ph.D., MPH, ABPP  
Editor-in-Chief  
Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation

### COMMENTS FOR THE AUTHOR:

Reviewer #1: JOOR-D-15-00116 Vocational Rehabilitation of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities: A Propensity-Score Matched Study

The study presented in the paper compares two types of VR transition services delivery with respect to employment outcomes after VR services for youth with disabilities. A propensity score matching approach was used to control for and take account of possible selection factors for participation in the different treatments.

Generally speaking this is a well-written paper. The methodology is a good choice and is rigorously and appropriately applied and very well described in the paper. Internal validity for the treatment effect is strong with the propensity score matching. The authors have adequately demonstrated the success of the propensity score matching.

There is potentially one weakness that may affect generalizability of the findings that is not acknowledged in the paper, and that is the limitation of the control group size. Out of 11,951 youths participating with the START program, only 2,211 (18.5%) are used in the evaluation because there are only 2,211 non-START youths available as controls. Are the 2,211 youths representative of the whole group of 11,951? Could there be systematic differences in the effect of the program between the START participants for whom a control was available and those for whom no control was available?

One other question - why was there not a subgroup analysis for White? I understand the explanation around the collinearity between White and African American, but that shouldn't impact ability to look at White as a separate subgroup. You looked at both Male and Female and the same linear dependency will exist for them.

Reviewer #2: Dear Authors,

Thank you for the opportunity to review your manuscript. It was an interesting evaluation of the START Transitional VR program for youth with disabilities. I certainly agree that VR among youth with disabilities is critical. The use of the propensity-score matched study overcomes some very critical methodological barriers to conducting RCTs. Your analysis was very interesting and has some important implications for practitioners.

There are several areas which require refinement before this paper is published.

Introduction

- \* In the first paragraph you use the terms 'youth' and 'young adult' to characterize your sample of interest. In the developmental psychology literature these terms can mean different things and represent different parts of life. Check for consistency across your paper.
- \* I would have also liked the reader to discuss what makes the 'youth' period of life important/unique? Why would IPE VR be important at this period of life? How might it impact long term employment outcomes? I would have liked a great discussion of the transition from school to work for young people with disabilities.
- \* How might the uniqueness of the youth life phase make the planning and implementation of VR challenging? How might practitioners tailor what they know in adult settings to the youth populations?
- \* In that vein, it was unclear whether some of the studies you mention in the first paragraph take into account involvement in post-secondary school. An emerging body of research suggests that young people with disabilities stay in post-secondary school for longer periods to maintain education supports that are often not provided in workplace settings.
- \* You discuss several examples of transitional programs. Perhaps the authors might want to expand on the characteristics of these programs. The section on the existing VR programs assumes that the reader has a strong background on the topic.
- \* You mention that RCTs have not tested the fidelity of VR programs for youth. You might note that several researchers have conducted VR RCTs on adult/older adult samples. Are they effective in other age groups? What findings can we take from those studies and apply to youth samples? What makes the youth population different?
- \* You mention three research questions in your introduction. I'd suggest that you refer back to them in your discussion section to improve the flow and readability of the paper.

Methods

- \* Are the elements of the START program consistent with best practice in the VR field? Were they specifically designed for young adults?
- \* I wasn't entirely clear on the components of the non-START group. Was there any overlap in the types of VR services offered to that group?

- \* The VR program focused on young people leaving high school and entering the labor market. What about those choosing to attend university? If this was a purposeful exclusion, I would be more explicit, since attending post-secondary school is a milestone for young people. You might want to address this in the discussion section as well.
- \* Not sure if the journal requires the specific REB#. I would refer to the editor.
- \* I am curious to hear more about the measurement of functional/activity limitations in your study. Perhaps more details would be helpful for the reader. Was the measurement best practice in the field?

#### Discussion

- \* The findings seemed to be overstated in the discussion - while the start program was significantly associated with greater employment outcomes, the percentage employed was not drastically different (61% vs. 53%). As a reader, findings help show that the START program offers some benefits to youth. These definitely need to be examined in greater depth through qualitative and quantitative studies.
- \* I would have liked the authors to provide a more in-depth discussion of why African Americans and those on Medicare/Medicaid were associated with higher odds of rehabilitation. This would have contributed to a richer discussion. At times, throughout the discussion, it felt as though the authors were simply repeating the results.
- \* An expanded discussion of the limitations would be worthwhile. For instance, in the study, young people may have been placed in employment. However, there were no details regarding productivity in the workplace, and workplace activity limitations. It is not clear how well young people are thriving in the workplace. Also, it is not clear whether they are applying the skills they gained from VR. These are clear limitations of your approach.
- \* Also, in your limitations section, I would have liked for you to touch on some of the potential limitations of the PS analysis approach you used. It is clear that the approach has a number of benefits. However, there are some potential pitfalls documented in the literature that are worth noting.
- \* Lastly, in the Discussion section, I'd like you to comment on what about the VR programs might have been most successful in transitioning youth to work? Are there some key elements of the START program that are different from other adult VR programs, that OR professionals should consider when working with younger clients. Make the practice suggestions more clear.