Research Brief

Characteristics Associated with Perceived Underemployment Among Participants with Multiple Sclerosis

Introduction

Employment is widely considered one of the most important goals for people with disabling conditions. The objective of this study is to identify job characteristics related to perceived underemployment among people with multiple sclerosis (MS), while controlling for demographic, MS-related, and educational factors.

Key Findings

- Underemployment happens when there is a misalignment between the employee's current workload and their workload capacity (e.g. some part-time workers may pre- fer full-time work, or highly skilled workers may be engaged in work below their skill level)
- Both having a college education and working in professional/managerial occupations are related to a *greater* probability of perceived underemployment
- Lack of opportunity for career advancement was also a predictor of underemployment
- Lower earnings were a predictor of underemployment

What does this mean? (Conclusion) future implications

Employment plays a vital role in the health and overall life satisfaction of people with Multiple Sclerosis. Counselors and rehabilitation professionals can help clients with MS reach their professional goals by keeping the predictors of underemployment in mind when the client is planning their transition into the workforce or returning to the work. For example, when helping clients it will be important for counselors to consider how a college education, and higher earnings in a higher position all can contribute to clients fearing the loss of their disability benefits.