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Guest Editorial

Vision

Visual impairment may significantly impact an individual's ability to participate in occupations of choice. Visual impairment may impact a child's ability to meet developmental milestones, interact with their peers, learn, and play. For an adult, visual impairment may interfere with obtaining meaningful employment, learning skills, and engaging in leisure activities. For the older adult, visual impairment may impede social participation, reduce the ability to remain independent with activities of daily living, and engage in activities of choice.

This edition of *WORK* explores the impact of vision on occupations through the lifespan. Lyons, Johnson and Majzoub, examines how visual challenges impact children. They discuss specific mechanisms to minimize potential barriers to learning in order to maximize academic success and transitions to work. Case examples provided by Long and Markowitz explore the use of assistive technology and low vision devices to maximize efficiency in work tasks and to illustrate the specific roles of practitioners who work with individuals with visual impairment. Devices alone may not allow an individual to engage in occupations of choice. The environment must support our ability to complete desired activities. As such, Muzammil, Ahmad, Khan and Hasan examine aspects of the work environment, specifically the impact of noise and illumination on assembly tasks.

For individuals with visual impairment and blindness there are many barriers to employment. It has been estimated that only 40–45% of individuals who are visually impaired or blind are employed in the United States (American Foundation for the Blind). Robertson provides a case example of barriers to employment and the need for reasonable accommodations. Clements, Douglas, and Pavey explored household characteristics, socio-economic status and specific aspects of the individual's visual impairment affecting employment rates of individuals who were registered as blind or who had a visual impairment in Great Britain. Shaw and Gold provide a look at the development and validation of a tool to determine employment readiness for individuals with visual impairment or blindness.

Richter, Zetterlund, and Lundqvist looked at the occurrence of eye and neck/scapular symptoms associated with occupational risk factors (age, gender, and hours of near work) and the impact of improved visual ergonomics on these symptoms. Throughout the life span individuals with visual impairment often need to learn compensatory strategies and require the use of assistive devices to remain independent and safe. Unfortunately, many do not use devices appropriately or do not accept them. Fok, Polgar, Shaw, and Jutai examine the use of low vision devices for daily occupations and explore the individual's perspective on device use.

This rich compilation of current research on visual impairments is an important contribution to the academic and clinical community. Meeting the needs of people of all ages presenting with visual impairments requires a focused team of researchers and practitioners to meet their occupational demands.

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