

Meeting Needs At The University Level For Students With Autism

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Presented at: *The Second Aspect Autism in Education Conference, 5th -6th May 2016, Melbourne ©*

Background: The nature of service provision for adults with autism in higher education has rarely been examined (Masterson and Meeks, 2014). This gap in knowledge exists in both developed and less developed countries, as autism conditions are a relatively new area of research. It is important to examine these services mainly for the improvement of practices. **Aim and purpose:** Part of this study compared four universities from countries (the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia) with two different levels of development in terms of the most and least available services for university students with autism. My aim is to discover what services exist for these students in such settings, then to develop a suggested model of service provision. The comparison of the four institutions will underpin this work. **Methods:** The documentary analysis method was used to analyse various documents (e.g. universities publications regarding their services for students with disabilities). The analytical methodology involved selecting relevant parts from various documents, labelling them, then creating categories by bringing several codes together. The analytical units were paragraphs and sentences. Then, the frequency of each type of service provided was accounted for. **Findings and discussion:** These universities offered a range of services. Social support ranks as the least common service. The findings show that researchers' recommendations are not considered in current practices. Students with autism at the university level are mostly capable of coping academically. Their special interests as well as normal or above-normal IQs enable them to grasp university-level curricula. However, they struggle socially (Zeedyk et al., 2014). **Conclusion:** A second phase of investigation is needed to understand why such practices exist. No doubt, a certain level of academic support is important for these students; however, autism is mainly a social disability for individuals at the far end of the autism spectrum.

