

# Supporting Community Participation

## Understanding the Living Conditions of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and Challenging Behaviors (CB)

### Medication in individuals with ID and CB

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#### Introduction:

The authors initiated the project "Supporting Community Participation" (SCP) to collect data about the environment of people with intellectual disability (ID) who live in the federate state of North Rine-Westfalia. We performed a systematic literature search with a sensitive research string before the planned qualitative and quantitative part of the study. We assigned the extracted data to subcategories. This rapid review presents the data collected in the category "medication in individuals with ID and challenging behavior".

#### Methods:

- We conducted a systematic search based on the current standards for systematic reviews using six prominent databases in May 2023.
- Studies with the set keywords and subject headings in the title and abstract fields in English or German language published between 2013 and 2023 where included.
- We included studies as well as grey literature, but no comments or letters to the editor.
- Search strings combined synonyms for ID and CB.
- Three reviewers screened the studies due to the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1) and assigned the extracted data to subcategories.
- For the rapid review in the subcategory "medication in individuals with ID and CB", we included 274 snippets out of 59 studies.

Table 1

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Adults	Samples with <50% of the target population
Intellectual disability	
Challenging behavior	
Settings: health care, employment, housing	Living with the family of origin, host family
	School setting
	Studies concerning test development, testing of surveys, screening instruments

#### Results:

- Challenging behavior is a common phenomenon in people with ID.
- People with ID suffer more often from a psychiatric disorder than the general population. Prescribing rates of psychotropic medication are higher than the prevalence of psychiatric disorders may suggest.
- Reasons for high prescribing rates are CB and the lack of other multidisciplinary therapeutic approaches.
- Studies that examined the efficacy of psychotropic medication on CB are contradictory, especially when there is no diagnosis of comorbid psychiatric disorder.
- The types of psychotropic medication that are often used are antipsychotics, mostly atypical antipsychotics, and anxiolytics.
- International guidelines and experts advise the use of medication as ultima ratio to treat harmful behavior in a low dose and for a short period of time.
- People with ID are at high risk of receiving high-dose therapy with antipsychotics over and extended period without follow-up monitoring and develop more side effects than the general population.
- There are different national and international programs and guidelines that advise withdrawal attempts to reduce the use of psychotropics in people with ID. Studies that examine withdrawal of psychotropic medication showed a successful reduction of medication in some patients. Benefits were better health conditions and better sense of self. We identified positive predictors and barriers for a successful withdrawal.

#### Conclusions:

Individual multidisciplinary therapeutic approaches, a multidisciplinary network and involvement of all stakeholders reduces overmedication in people with ID and helps to improve their health condition.

#### Institutionelle Zugehörigkeit

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#### Key elements of the systematic literature research

Prescription of psychotropic medication is higher in individuals with ID

Prescribing rates of psychotropic medication is higher than the prevalence of psychiatric disorders suggests

Reasons for high prescribing rates are lack of other multi-professional therapeutic options and CB

(Inter)national guidelines advise the use of psychotropic medication in low dose for a short period of time

(Inter)national guidelines and experts support withdrawal attempts

Following a reduction of medication, rebound effects might occur temporarily

Withdrawal attempts or at least a dose reduction of medication might be successful

Barriers for a successful reduction of medication: missed psychiatric disorder, lack of multi-professional setting or lack of communication with all stakeholders

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