



RESEARCH RUNDOWN

The Impact of Community Transitions: Process and Outcomes

There is little research about what happens after persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities move from institutions into community homes. Does living in a home impact health, access to healthcare, and quality of life? This long-term study aims to answer these questions. We are also looking at St.Amant's Community Transitions process. What we learn from this study will help improve the lives of people with disabilities living in the community.

What is this research about?

In the past, persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) often lived in large institutions. Over the past few decades, we have learned that community living can improve people's lives. You can view our report on the impact of moving from institutions to the community [here](#).

Since 2014, over 50 persons with IDD have moved from St.Amant's main facility in Winnipeg, Manitoba. People have moved into family and agency-supported homes. We will follow people before and after these moves to assess their impact. This study is one of the first to provide a complete look at community transitions for persons with IDD. The three main goals of the study are:

1. To find out what steps St.Amant takes to prepare and transition a person from their facility into a home in the community.
2. Measure the impact of community living on health, access to healthcare, and quality of life of persons who moved to the community.
3. Measure the impact of community living on family members, and other people in their support network.

What you need to know:

St.Amant is offering people they support the chance to move into homes in the community to help provide the best quality of life. This in-depth study will assess the impact these moves have. We will assess people's health and quality of life before and after their move. We will also assess the impact on their family and friends.

What are the researchers doing?

We are in year four of this long-term evaluation project.

Process

To assess St.Amant's community transitions process we are using three methods:



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1. Records review: We review files about the steps taken when a person moves to their new home.
2. St.Amant survey: We sent a survey to people involved with the moves to community homes such as: families, staff, and funders.
3. External survey (in progress): We sent a survey to staff outside of St.Amant. These staff support people in their new homes. We asked them about their experiences with the process. We are in the process of looking at the results of the 26 surveys. We will share the findings soon.

Outcomes

Health

To assess changes in health, we review health charts of persons before their move. After they settle into their new home, we assess their health again. We repeat this yearly. We assess: physical health, mental health, daily living skills, and health-related behaviours, and access to healthcare services. For example, breast cancer screening tests and immunizations. We then compare the health data from before their move to after their move to see the impact.

Quality of Life

We assess the quality of life of persons before their move, and then yearly after they move. We use tools called the San Martín Scale¹ and the INICO-FEAPS². One tool is for persons with IDD who can answer questions by themselves. The other tool is for a proxy, someone who knows the person well, such as family or support staff. These tools have eight domains: self-determination, emotional, physical and material well-being, rights, development, social inclusion, and relationships.

Support Networks

To assess the impact of community living on support networks, we will survey family and friends after their loved ones move into their new home. We will ask the support networks about nine domains that impact quality of life: health, finances, family and community relationships, support from others, support from services, values, careers, and leisure. A copy of the survey can be found [here](#)³.

What have the researchers found so far?

Process

Twenty-four people involved with the moves to community homes filled out a survey. This includes: St.Amant staff, funders, and family members. We found that all survey participants think the transition process has been a success. A large portion even rated them as a very big success.

Health Outcomes

To date, we have health profiles of 45 persons with IDD before they moved into their community homes. We compared these health profiles to other Manitobans with IDD and we found some differences. For example, the number of people with chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes are lower than other people with IDD. A sample of the health results before a person moved are shown in Table 1.

We need more information to fill some gaps in the health profiles. For example, we need to know more about how active people are. We also need to know how often people are screened for hearing loss and dementia. These are common as people grow older. More pre-transition health data can be found [here](#).

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Table 1. Health of 45 persons with IDD prior to transition.

Health Condition	% of population
Mental illness	71
Chronic constipation	71
Epilepsy	51
Sleep problem	18
Diabetes	0

Why is it important?

This study is important because moving from a large facility to a community setting is a major life change. Moving into the community can impact a person’s health, access to healthcare, and quality of life. This is the first study to take an in-depth look at community transitions. We will learn about the impact of community living and how the process can be improved. Lessons learned will be shared broadly so all can learn how living in the community leads to better lives for people with IDD.

Quality of Life

We assessed the quality of life of 59 persons with IDD before their move. We found the total quality of life scores of these persons while living at St.Amant was in the average range. This means their quality of life was about the same as other people in other studies¹.

Some domains were higher than the average, such as: self-determination, emotional and physical well-being, and social inclusion. Some domains were a little lower than average, such as: material well-being, rights, personal development, and interpersonal relations.

So far, we assessed the quality of life of 33 people since they have moved and settled into their community homes. Since their move, all domains have improved as shown in Figure 1

More pre-transition quality of life data can be found [here](#).

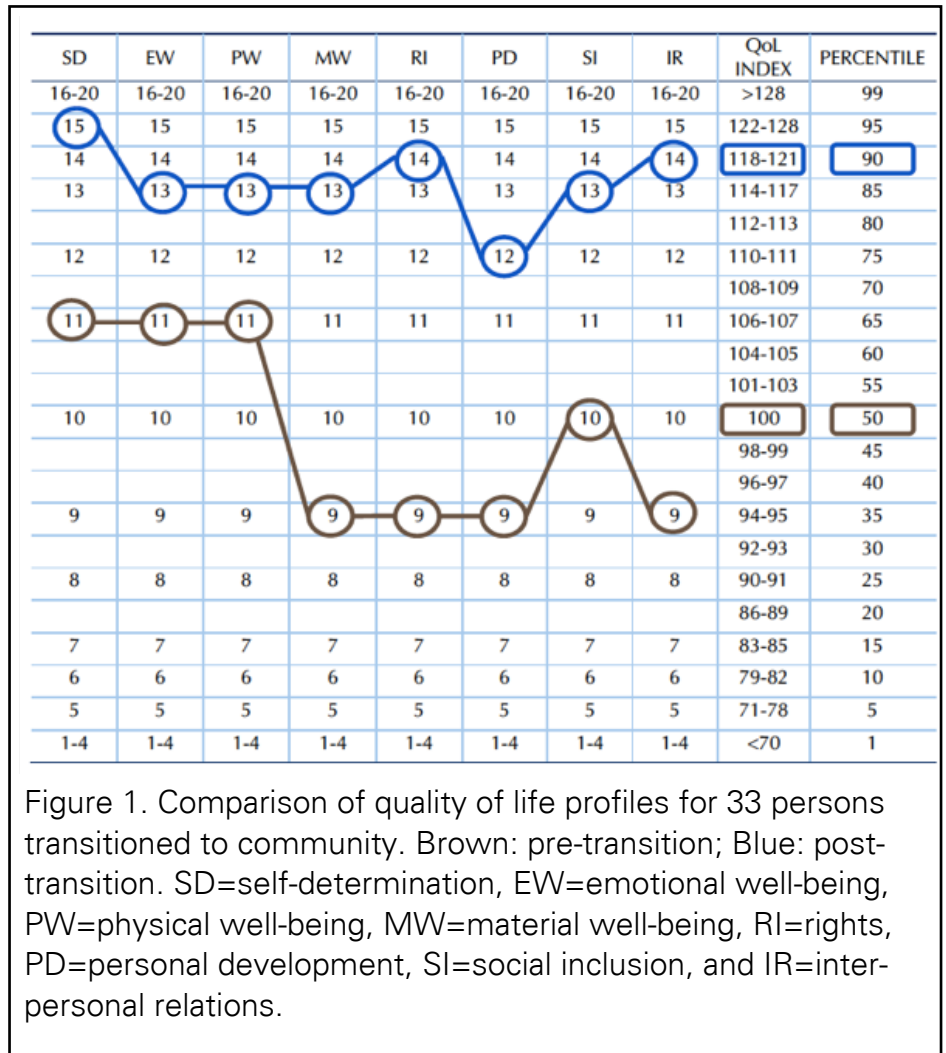


Figure 1. Comparison of quality of life profiles for 33 persons transitioned to community. Brown: pre-transition; Blue: post-transition. SD=self-determination, EW=emotional well-being, PW=physical well-being, MW=material well-being, RI=rights, PD=personal development, SI=social inclusion, and IR=interpersonal relations.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

References

- ¹Verdugo, M. A., Gómez, L. E., Arias, B., Navas, P., & Schalock, R. L. (2014). Measuring quality of life in people with intellectual and multiple disabilities: Validation of the San Martín Scale. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 35*(1), 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2013.10.025>
- ²Gomez, L. E., Verdugo, M. A., & Arias, B. (2015). Validity and reliability of the INICO-FEAPS Scale: An assessment of quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Research in developmental disabilities, 36C*, 600–610. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2014.10.049>
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Research Team

This study is a collaboration between researchers from the University of Manitoba, St.Amant, and other community agencies in Manitoba who support persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in the community.

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*Team members and affiliations may have changed over the course of the study.

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Additional Resources

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At the time of writing this project was ongoing, version date: August, 2020. Latest versions are available at <http://stamant.ca/research/our-research/project-summaries/>