

IPS impact study webinar Q&A

A summary of questions and answers (Q&A) from the panel discussion with Moira Wilson (lead researcher), Warren Elwin (Chief Executive, Work Counts), Dr Helen Lockett (Work Counts science advisor), and Tyron Pini (General Manager, Workwise), following the webinar.

Questions and Answers

1. Where can I access the published article?

For access to the New Zealand Medical Journal article, visit the website www.nzmj.org.nz. Subscription is free for individuals.

2. How did researchers track participants out to 36 months after commencement of the study? Is this due to the participants still being connected with Health NZ / former district health boards (DHBs)?

No, researchers didn't need to rely on the participants remaining connected to Health NZ. The advantage of the linked administrative data is that it allowed observation of outcomes long after people had potentially left contact with the service. For example, researchers could link up tax data (to look at earnings) with hospitalisation data (to look at mental health service usage) and education data. This meant researchers didn't rely on remaining in contact with people to observe the outcomes. All data is de-identified and anonymised.

3. Are there any plans to conduct a randomised controlled trial (RCT) in Aotearoa?

There are no plans to conduct an RCT in Aotearoa that Work Counts is aware of. What this study demonstrates is the value you can get from accessing linked administrative data, compared to the cost to run an RCT. We really want to understand more, possibly with a larger sample, so potentially we could repeat this method as a cost-effective way to conduct research. It's a very thorough, rigorous research that mirrors the conditions of an RCT but without the high cost. Also, given the extensive evidence of the effectiveness of IPS, it would be hard to justify an RCT where participants are randomised and some wouldn't receive an effective intervention, and instead be given the control intervention known to be least effective.

4. Were any of the study participants identified as being of refugee background?

Researchers looked at participants with a migrant background, but not specifically a refugee background. It may be possible to identify this sub-group in the data, but it would be a stretch to look at this within the sample size, as there would only be a small number of participants with this characteristic.

- 5. When looking at the long-term outcomes for employment, was it useful? Were researchers able to look at whether participants were in the same job or different jobs, and the reasons for any changes?**

Although it would be possible in the data to count the number of different employers a person had over that period, that's not something that was done in this study.

- 6. Regarding the gender differences for females (total incomes being lower), was it possible to explore the types of jobs across gender, for example the nature of lower paid jobs?**

Although it may be possible in the data to find out more detail about lower paid jobs, that's not something that was done in this study.

- 7. What is the plan regarding policy briefs or making funding recommendations for IPS based on the results?**

The research has already garnered quite a lot of traction and notice. Presentations were made to various ministry policy teams in both vote health and vote welfare. A number of ministries raised the research with their chief executives, and at least two of the ministries, including the Ministry of Social Development, raised it to their minister.

Work Counts' focus is on sharing information about the impact and effectiveness of IPS employment support rather than making specific funding recommendations.

- 8. What is the response to the research from a provider's point of view?**

As an IPS provider that was involved in the study, Workwise was interested in how the research shows an increase in engagement with health and welfare supports, as well as other supports. Workwise believes this is because people are being more proactive about engaging and reaching out when they're accessing wrap-around employment support. There appears to be an increase in communication: whether it's the employment consultant talking to the clinician, or the person calling to give an update about what's happening. Anecdotally, Workwise generally sees an increase in trust around service – in this sense, the research supports what's happening on the ground.

- 9. Does the article include qualitative stories of the participants, showing the impact on a person and their whānau?**

Researchers haven't included any case studies this time, but some of the earlier research did have some case study research. However, The Centre for Person Centred Research did a review of qualitative research around IPS employment support, and AUT has done some useful work around this too.