



ADULTS WITH DYSLEXIA: A SNAPSHOT OF THE DEMANDS ON ADULTHOOD IN AUSTRALIA

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STUDY SUMMARY

A growing body of international research suggests that people with dyslexia face greater psychosocial problems than the average population, in addition to the challenges associated with their dyslexia. However, few studies have investigated this phenomenon in Australia.

We used an online two-part survey incorporating the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales (WEMWBS) to explore the psychosocial wellbeing of 65 Australian adults with dyslexia. We also captured data on participants' educational attainment, employment status and whether they had chosen to disclose their dyslexia to friends, family and/or colleagues.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were aged from 18 to 65, but largely clustered within the ages of 20 to 49. Around 70% had completed Year 12 and attained a tertiary qualification, 15% had completed Year 12, and 15% had left school before Year 12.

Around 75% of participants were working either full-time or part-time.

KEY FINDINGS

Participants' scores on the WEMWBS were compared to participants who took part in a population-based study known as the Health Survey for England 2016. Analysis revealed that Australian adults with dyslexia had significantly lower levels of wellbeing than participants in the English study.

Participant responses showed:

- only 48% felt optimistic about the future
- 67% did not feel good about themselves
- 23% felt they were loved 'sometimes'
- 73% felt that they 'never' or only 'sometimes' had energy to spare.

WHAT RESEARCH HAS FOUND

62%

REPORT A LACK OF SELF
CONFIDENCE

73%

HAVE LOWER THAN AVERAGE
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING
OUTCOMES

66%

DO NOT FEEL GOOD ABOUT
THEMSELVES

73%

HAVE LITTLE OR NO ENERGY
TO SPARE

OVERALL LOWER LEVELS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING COMPARED
TO THE GENERAL POPULATION



IMPLICATIONS

Despite achieving similar educational and employment outcomes as the average Australian population, adults with dyslexia showed lower psychosocial wellbeing. This suggests that the challenges associated with dyslexia add significant additional burden to people – particularly within the education system and the workplace, but also in navigating relationships.

As dyslexia affects around 1 in 10 people in Australia, more needs to be done to determine how people with dyslexia can participate fully in society with their wellbeing supported.

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