

Disclosure on transitioning to the labour market for graduates with disabilities

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Introduction

- Employees with disabilities are underrepresented in the workplace.
- Although greater numbers of individuals with disabilities are entering employment, figures are found to fluctuate dependent upon the type of disability (Lucas, 2008; ONS, 2011).
- Disabilities associated with mental health have the lowest employment rates (<28%), compared to diabetes (>57%) (DoH, 2000; ONS, 2011).
- Reasons for these discrepancies are not provided, but they may be related to unpredictability and long-term sickness (Newton et al., 2007).

Disclosure – A major Issue.

- Anxiety due to impact on employment prospects.
- Fear of discrimination if disclose.
- Fitness to practice issues if disclosure made.
- Negative Impact of past disclosure
- Individuals who do disclose:
 - emphasise their abilities without requesting adjustments as they understand the importance of managing disabilities.
 - Disclose to avoid the consequences of being 'discovered' at later stages (Stanley et al., 2011; Velde, 2000).

Research specific to the experiences of healthcare professionals with disabilities is limited (Matt, 2008; Morris and Turnbull, 2007)

Even less specific to occupational therapy (Bevan, 2014; Beagan and Chacala, 2012; Chacala et al., 2013; Velde, 2000).

Current research is limited to small-scale qualitative studies, but do not offer a statistical understanding into disabilities within the profession.

Research Question:

“What are the experiences of recently qualified occupational therapists with seen and unseen disabilities, in the workplace?”

Method

UK

Online ads

Jan-March 2014

N=27

Norway

Email with link, 688 OTs

May-July 2014

N=49

- Inclusion criteria: OT graduates from 2007-2014 who have a disability.
- Analysed with SPSS v.22
- Methodological challenges

Demographic

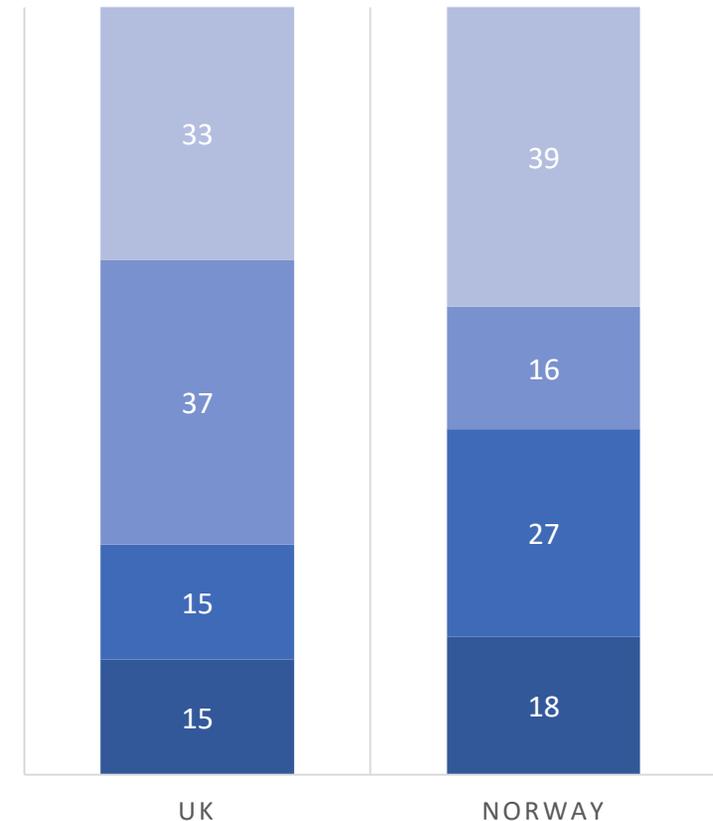
- 76 Informants (UK=27, Norway=49)
- Informants:
 - 91 % female and 9 % male
 - 46 % are 20-29 years old
 - 67 % graduated between 2011-2013
 - 74 % are employed full time
 - 67 % have worked 0-2 years, 16% have worked 4-5 years

Disability and transition

- Disabilities
 - 87 % invisible
 - 9 % visible
 - 4 % both
- 76 % of informants have disclosed their disability
- Overall, 61% have rated the experience of transitioning into work as easy or very easy.

EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITION (%)

■ Very difficult ■ Difficult ■ Easy ■ Very easy



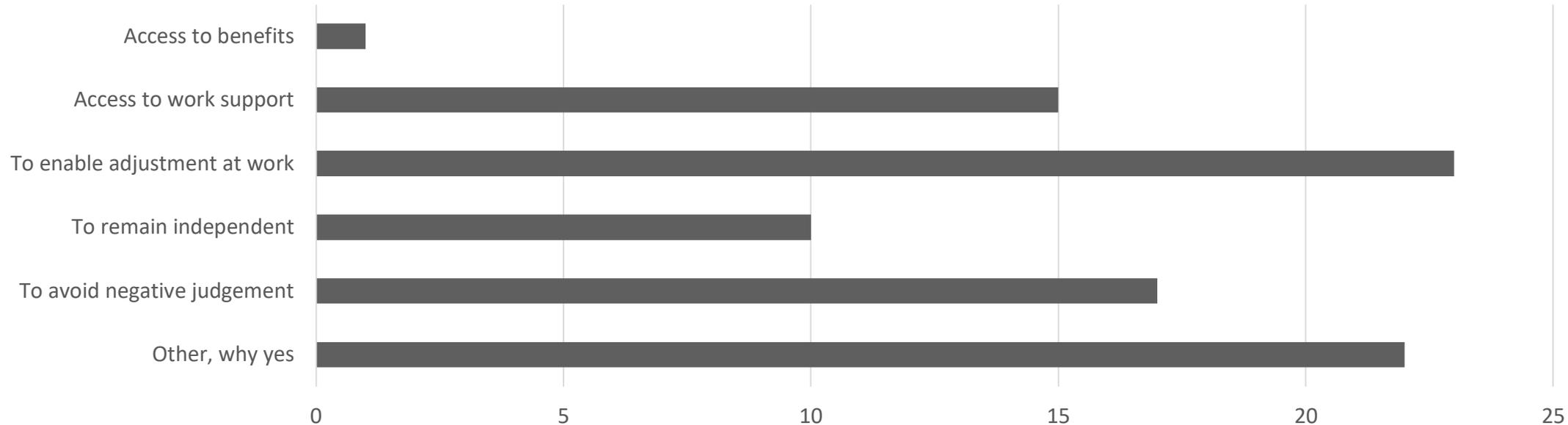
Disclosure

- If you live in the UK you are more likely to disclose your disability compared to if you live in Norway.
- In the UK informants disclosed earlier, often in the application, while in Norway the informants often waited until they had started working.
- Informants with a visible disability disclose earlier compared to informants with invisible disabilities.

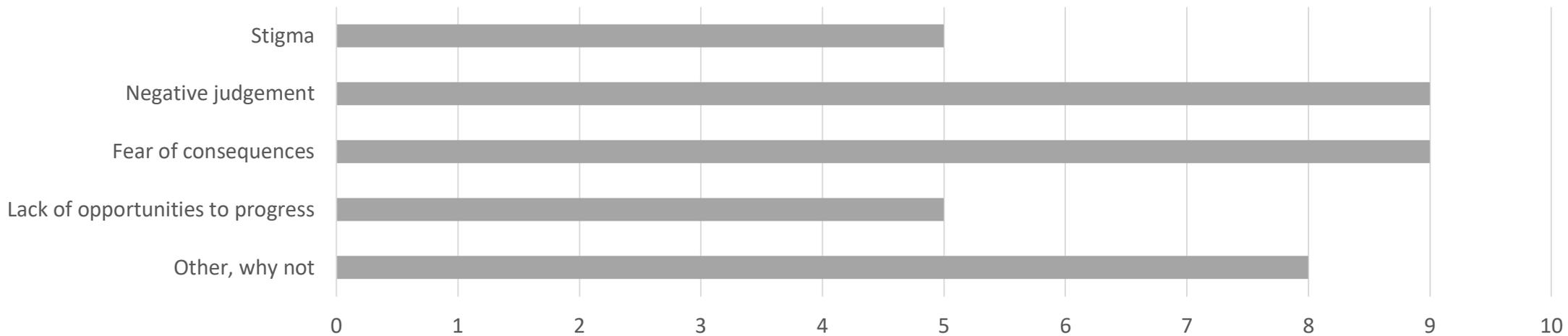
Content analysis of UK data found disclosure was associated with:

- Wanting to request workplace adjustments, access equipment and support.
- Being 'honest' and mindful of 'health and safety'.
- To promote an understanding about disabilities, their unpredictable nature and impact upon performance.
- To avoid negative judgment when unable to perform tasks and needing time off.
- The 'fear' of consequences of non-disclosure.

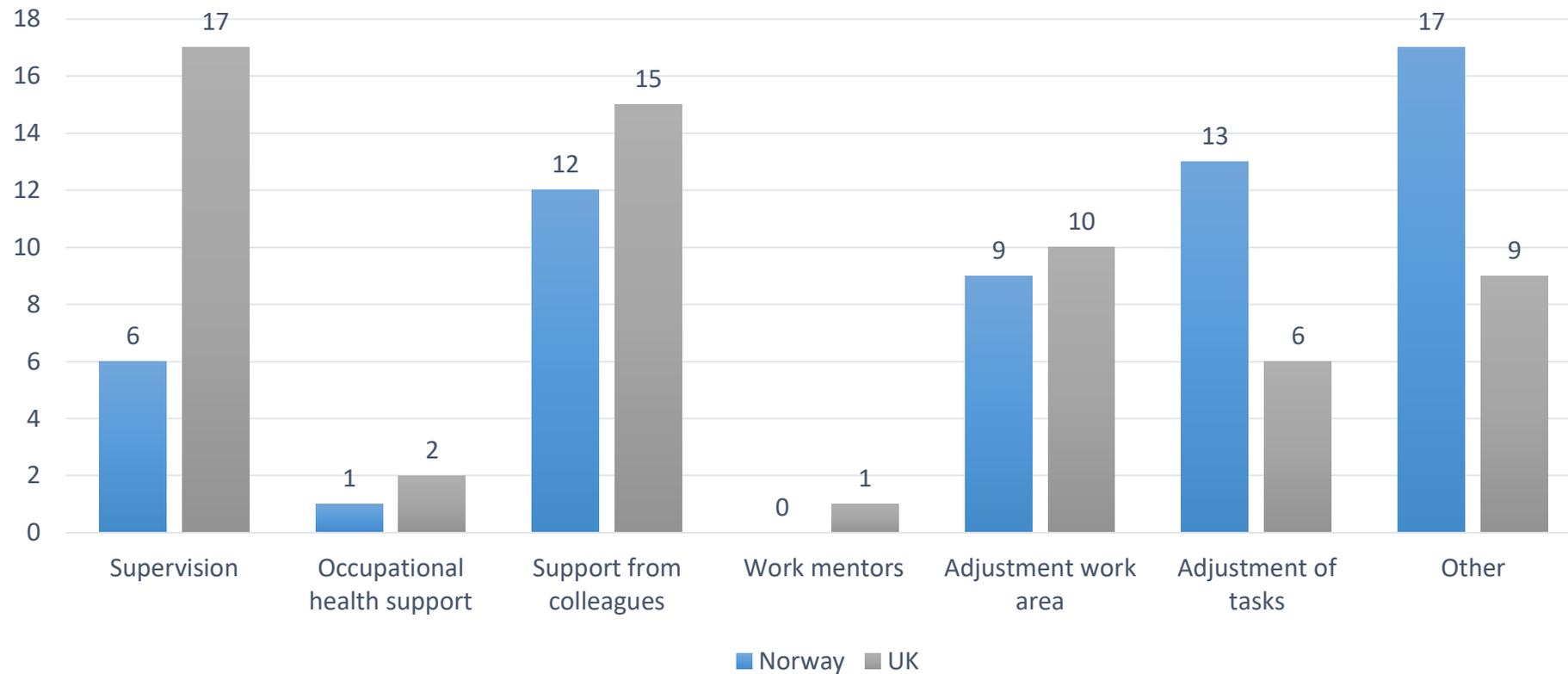
Reasons for disclosing (N=58)



Reasons for not disclosing (N=18)



Utilised strategies at work



Quotes

- It was very important for me not to cause doubt around my abilities as a professional, or appear as a victim. There is a big difference between what you tell your colleagues and your boss. I feel it is more important to be open and honest to one's boss, and then you have to evaluate what you tell your colleagues. This to avoid being treated as a patient that needs fixing. But also to protect one's private life, not to tell anything that can be used against you. (Norwegian informant)

Discussion and conclusion

- Transition experiences
- Motivations for disclosure
- Future Implications

Thank You

Any Questions