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Scientific abstract

Background. Norway shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020. People with intellectual disabilities (IDs) found that sheltered work facilities, day centre and leisure activities were closed or access was considerably limited. Like other countries, infection control measures resulted in strict regulations regarding social mobility, and activities. Both family members and professional caregivers were worried how these restrictions' would impact the users.

Aims. The aim of this paper is to investigate how users with particularly complex needs including intellectual disability (ID) reacted to the changes and restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Methods. As few studies of changes during the pandemic include users with ID and multiple, complex needs, the authors adopted a qualitative approach, using a semi-structured interview guide. The ten participants were leading ID nurses in residential facilities in community settings. The participants comprised nine women and one man, aged between 24 and 63 years. They possessed an average of 14.6-year experience of users with ID/ASD and 9.5-year work experience in their present positions. The questionnaire included the information about the participants and the users of the ten chosen residential facilities. The remaining questions were suitable open-ended questions related to the 2020 pandemic lockdown of services for people with ID. The interviews were taped, transcribed and analysed using a thematic analysis.

Findings. The thematic analysis generated six main themes, including both user and staff perspectives: *daily routines, activities, facilitation of tasks, and well-being*, from the users perspectives, and use of working hours and positive staff experiences, from the staff perspectives.

Then residential facilities constituted a convenience sample of services for users with multiple, complex needs. Thus, we do not know whether our findings are representative. Further research should include user opinions based on the findings of this study.

Practical implications. The users represented in this study appeared to experience less stress during the pandemic, contrary to the expectations of professional caregivers. The findings indicated more well-being among users. It was noted that receiving services at home, largely

flexible schedules, staying in bed a little longer in the morning, and avoiding stressful situations such as travelling in minibuses, was appreciated by the users.

Easy to read abstract

Norway shut down during the corona pandemic in 2020. Day centres for people with disabilities activities were closed, or open fewer hours. Family members and professional caregivers were worried.

The study wanted to find out what people with disabilities thought about the pandemic restrictions.

To find out, we asked ten nurses from group homes. These nurses had worked for many years for people with disabilities. The users in these group homes all had many severe problems. The nurses were asked about how the people with disabilities felt about the Corona pandemic.

Two researches read the interviews very thorough. They found that the people with intellectual disability were less stressed and felt more well-being than usual during the first period of the pandemic. This was because the people with disabilities had more time in the mornings and they did not have to travel in crowded mini-vans. They could decide more for themselves what they wanted to do at home.