



Health and Wellness: Introduction to the Special Issue

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This special issue of *Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders* is devoted to health and wellness from several perspectives. Notably, children, youth, and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the same health issues as the general population as well as unique conditions that challenge conventional service models. Furthermore, primary, secondary, and tertiary intervention must be adapted to person-specific learning styles, setting characteristics, the competencies of care providers, and multidisciplinary approaches toward prevention and treatment. The good news is that health and wellness initiatives continue to grow with favorable results and effective research-to-practice translation is evident on many fronts.

Among 11 articles featured in the special issue, five reviews highlight contemporary topics that have substantive evidence support. Relative to applied behavior analysis (ABA) strategies, Jennings et al. (2022) reviewed teaching and intervention procedures for establishing healthcare and hygiene routines, Ford et al. (2022) reviewed the effectiveness of antecedent-based programs for sleep problems, and Miltenberger and Novotny (2022) reviewed safety skills assessment and training. The biological bases of health problems are covered in two reviews, one by Batarseh et al. (2022) on the efficacy of gluten-free and casein-free diets, and the second by Li et al. (2022) on changes in gut microbiota and current mechanisms of probiotic and traditional Chinese medicine therapies. All of these reviews synthesize the dominant areas per topic represented in the existing literature, present practice implications, and suggest new directions for medical, basic, and applied research.

The remaining six articles in the special issue describe health-directed service delivery projects with supporting

process and outcome data. Blackman et al. (2022) evaluated a systems-level intervention to improve trainer integrity at a behavioral healthcare setting, Lundy et al. (2022) addressed acceptability and social validity of a technology-based menstrual hygiene management plan, and Mattson et al. (2022) examined rates of school absenteeism and contributing factors among preschool-elementary school students. Not surprisingly, three articles detail projects at human service organizations occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic: Maguire et al. (2022) report training, performance management, and social validity measures with care providers who implemented health promotion and risk mitigation protocols, Rothschild et al. (2022) conducted mixed-methods social validity assessment of organizational responsiveness to the health crisis, and Wine and Doan (2022) delivered a behavioral safety program and documented the effects on virus transmission. These articles are notable for large-scale administration of assessment and intervention with multiple data sources to evaluate efficacy and effectiveness.

My hope is that the special issue captures health and wellness priorities among persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, valued stakeholders, and society-at-large. A further goal is to encourage research that will refine current service options and produce innovative practices that are beneficial across the lifespan.

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