



Sociological Briefing

Australian job recruitment and disabled persons

The low employment levels of people with disabilities generate the development of actions and strategies aimed to overcoming this discrimination. Sociology plays a crucial role in providing evidence of what works and the lessons to be learned from past experiences. This article approaches the Australian case to understand the levels of alignment of job recruitment with the needs of disabled people.

The authors of “(Under)valuing lived experience in the disability workforce: A snapshot of Australian job recruitment” published in the *Australian Journal of Social Issues* develop a content analysis of advertisements for positions referring to live experience or peer work and disability. The results demonstrate that the employment opportunities for people with lived experience of mental illness were higher than for other types of disability.

Introducing the research topic

The authors introduce the topic of the article contextualizing the lack of recognition of people with disability, particularly in the labour market, and the role they can play based on their expertise. According to this, Kate David and Katie Butler describe the value of “a lived experience disability workforce, the lack of value ascribed to people with disabilities’ workforce contributions and the disparities in employment outcomes between people with and without disabilities

internationally and in Australia”. Starting with an international general framework, the authors describe the advancements in Australia in the field, raising awareness about the discrimination affecting the inequalities of people with disabilities regarding paid employment opportunities.

The study develops a content analysis of job advertisements, a method that the authors have not identified in previous studies in the field of disabilities, health, or human services. The job advertisements collected were 57 and included positions referring to the lived experience of peer work and disability.

Employment opportunities

The results are framed under seven sections: characteristics of the included job advertisements, what peer workers do, few leadership and management roles, the proliferation of mental health and recovery-oriented roles, disability as part of “equal employment opportunity” rather than required expertise, and qualifications and experience required. For each section, the authors highlight some of the most relevant texts related to the advertisements, concluding that the employment opportunities are higher for people with lived experience of mental health illness and less for other types of disabilities. In light of the results, this contribution concludes with practical and narrowed

recommendations for disability organisations and systemic reforms addressing the need to facilitate “recognition of lived experience as a valuable criterion for disability sector employment and to harness the benefits of a disability peer workforce”.