Several surveys suggest that employers had positive outlooks on hiring individuals who used AAC. Concerns stated by the surveyed employers included meeting job qualifications, education and skill set, effective communication across settings. Benefits to working with these individuals: personal satisfaction, workplace moral booster, advocacy and spreading awareness. Challenges to working with these individuals: reconstructing and developing appropriate jobs, technology knowledge gap, communication barriers meeting demands of the job.

Methods

- Comprehensive search of four online databases:
  - PubMed, Scopus, PsychINFO, Web of Science
- Literature inclusion criteria:
  - Individuals with CCN who use AAC
  - Community based employment
  - Quantitative data from interventions
  - Qualitative data gathered from interviews of case studies, focus groups, and surveys
- Published in English in a peer reviewed journal.
- A total of 32 articles matched these inclusion criteria after initial screening of studies, 10 articles were selected to be included within.

Results

Employer Perspectives

- Several surveys suggest that employers had positive outlooks on hiring individuals who used AAC.
- Concerns stated by the surveyed employers included meeting job qualifications, education and skill set, effective communication across settings.
- Benefits to working with these individuals: personal satisfaction, workplace moral booster, advocacy and spreading awareness.
- Challenges to working with these individuals: reconstructing and developing appropriate jobs, technology knowledge gap, communication barriers meeting demands of the job.

Improving Outcomes

- Vocational rehab programs focusing on employment skill development pursued desired career paths, negotiating workplace culture, handling finances, transportation, communication within the workplace.
- Supportive e-coaches that follow individuals throughout beginning of their careers to help work on resumes, develop workplace vocabulary.
- Volunteering can also act as a helpful stepping stone to obtaining paid work.
- When appropriate measures are made to help with the development of career and employment skills, it results with positive employment.

Employment outcomes were supported by
- Financial benefits to supplement government benefits
- Personal benefits include: flexibility of self-employment, being able to enjoy work activities, and choosing their workload
- Successful self-employment outcomes were supported by personal characteristics, education, experiences, and technology

Alternatives to Employment

- Self Employment
- Telework

- Eliminated the time and stress of traveling to and from work
- Adapted and customized work spaces
- Managing and setting up work schedules to work around the disability
- Better management of medical appointments and other necessary activities of daily living
- Control the type of communication to co-workers and employers

Other Outcomes

- Improve self-esteem, give back to society, inspire others, gives a sense of purpose, productivity improves quality of life, identification with occupation
- Paying bills or spending money on leisure activities makes these individuals feel worthy which increased self-esteem. Long term financial independence allows them to buy houses, go traveling, plan weddings and have kids
- Engage in workplace activities allowed for continuous social interaction, developing relationships others they may not have met otherwise, and development of a support system

Other Outcomes

- Outdated ideas of the abilities of people who use AAC, stereotyping, only focusing on this populations’ disabilities.
- Time constraints caused more difficulty balancing work responsibilities with personal business, limited social interactions, advocating abilities and responsibilities.
- Low expectations and assumed incompetence resulting in limited and inappropriate education
- AAC limitations impeded performances to perform, multitask, respond quickly, convey tone, communication breakdowns.
- Acquiring AAC through the state or insurance is a slow process, AAC devices are expensive and difficult to get full coverage for the device and maintenance.

Conclusion

These results highlight the challenges that many individuals with CCN who use AAC face when obtaining and maintaining employment.

A large number of this population continue to be unemployed and struggle to find appropriate and fulfilling employment.

With appropriate education, experience, and training, appropriate assistive technology, and government policy, obtaining and maintaining employment is possible.

Despite challenges, employment allows these individuals to feel both some measure of financial independence as well as additional pride in their employment activities.

Directions for Future Research

- To date there continues to be limited research studies which documents the elements of successful employment for adults with CCN who use AAC.
- It is critical for future research to focus on the following areas:
  - Workplace functionality of AAC devices
  - Further development of education for individuals with CCN
  - Additional understanding of appropriate supports needed
  - Continued development of government policies and funding
  - Vocational rehab programs and skill building workshops