

Virtual Interview Training for Adults Receiving Prison-Based Employment Services: A Randomized Controlled Feasibility and Initial Effectiveness Trial

VOCATIONAL VILLAGES

- Located in two state prison in Michigan, Vocational villages are residential programs where offenders complete comprehensive job-readiness training prior to bring released into the community.

FEASIBILITY RESULTS

- VR-JIT was implemented with high fidelity by MDOC staff across 8 cohorts of participants
- 90% of the participants using VR-JIT self-reported it to be user friendly, helped prepare them to interview, fit their learning goals, and helped improve their job interview skills.

DISCUSSION

- VR-JIT appears to help enhance employment outcomes above and beyond prison-based employment readiness services.
- A fully-powered RCT is needed to confirm VR-JIT effectiveness
- Generalizability is limited to returning citizens enrolled in prison-based employment readiness services.
- Future research can explore whether the impact of VR-JIT translates to justice involved populations and services.

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INTRODUCTION

- Unemployment is recognized as a leading mechanism of recidivism
- Returning citizens struggle with navigating the job interview and discussing a prior conviction.
- Virtual Reality Job Interview Training (VR-JIT) is a computerized job interview simulator that was implemented in Michigan Department of Corrections' (MDOC) Vocational Villages.
- The Vocational Villages provides formal training in at least 13 trades for returning citizens prior to their release.

PRIMARY AIMS

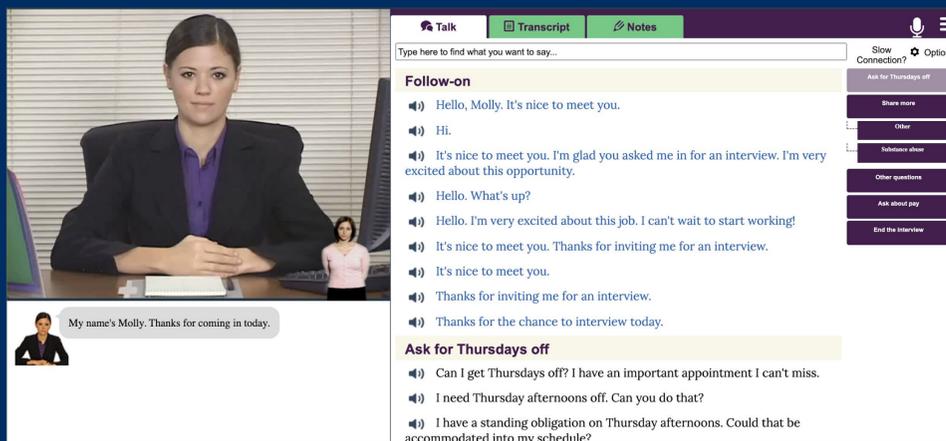
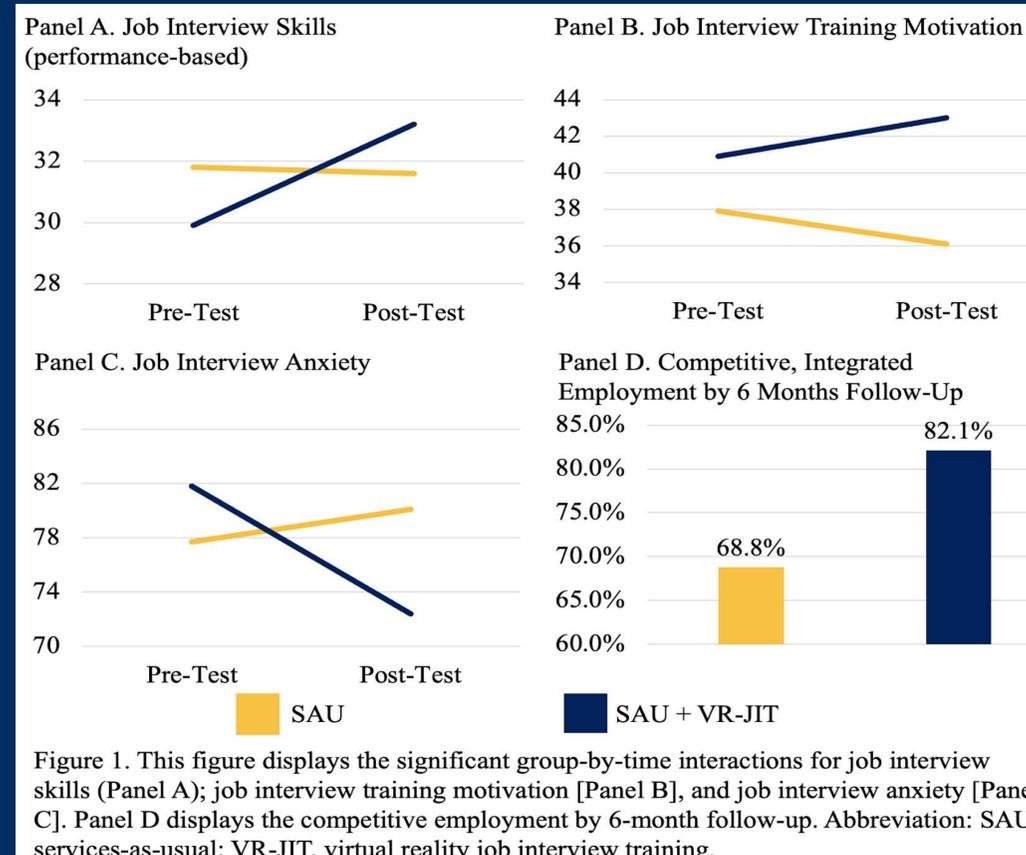
- To assess the feasibility of implementing VR-JIT within the Vocational Villages
- To evaluate the effectiveness of VR-JIT at enhancing employment outcomes for returning citizens within 6 months of release.

METHODS

- MDOC staff implemented VR-JIT
- VR-JIT implemented over 4 to 6 weeks
- Pre- and Post-test Measures:
 - Self-reported Interview anxiety, self-confidence, and training motivation
 - Role-Play Job Interviews
 - Employment status within 6 months -administrative/pay stub verified

Table 1
Background Characteristics of Study Sample

	SAU Group (n=16)	SAU+ VR-JIT Group (n=28)	Test Statistic (t or χ^2)	p
Age (M, SD)	39.1 (8.9)	38.1 (6.1)	0.4	.66
Race				
Black/African American (%)	56.3	46.4		
White (%)	37.5	46.4		
Latinx (%)	0.0	7.1	3.3	.35
More than one race (%)	8.7	4.2		
Self-Reported mental health disorders				
Depressive disorder (%)	25.0	17.9	0.3	.57
Anxiety disorder (%)	25.0	7.1	2.8	.10
Bipolar disorder (%)	18.8	7.1	1.4	.24
Posttraumatic stress disorder (%)	12.5	7.5	0.4	.55
Psychological distress (M, SD)	3.7 (6.1)	2.1 (3.3)	1.1	.27
Criminal justice history				
Total arrest count (M, SD)	8.3 (9.4)	8.0 (4.9)	0.1	.90
Total years in prison/jail (M, SD)	8.8 (6.6)	6.3 (4.2)	1.5	.13
Primary offense was violent (%)	56.3	53.6	<0.1	.86
Risk for non-violent re-offense				
Low (%)	62.5	60.7	1.9	.39
Medium (%)	18.8	7.1		
High (%)	18.8	32.1		
Risk for violent re-offense				
Medium (%)	50.0	60.7	0.5	.49
High (%)	50.0	39.3		



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