paradigm shift from employment support towards teaching/training for employers and employees to break these barriers.

**Conclusion** Despite government initiatives, employment for Learning-disabled adults and their able Family-Carers remains an unfulfilled dream. More targeted employment, teaching/training and flexible-working acknowledging the fragile interdependent relationship between Learning-disabled adults and Family-Carers, may prevent a significant loss of manpower and productivity.

**1566 VIBRATION INDUCED INJURIES IN HANDS IN LONG-TERM VIBRATION EXPOSED WORKERS**

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**Introduction** Long-term vibration exposure may cause neurophysiological disturbances such as dampness and tingling, reduced grip strength and difficulties in handling small objects. Most of the exposed workers are right-handed and thus, the right hand will usually have a higher vibration exposure than the left hand. In this study we are comparing neurophysiological test results in the right and left hand in long-term vibration exposed workers. The underlying hypothesis is that signs of adverse health effects would be more pronounced in the right hand of the workers.

**Methods** The study is based on 47 (36 males and 11 females; mean-age 30±12 y; mean exposure time 16 y), all former patients from the department of occupational and environmental medicine, Gothenburg university. The comparison group consisted of 29 randomly selected subjects from the general population of Gothenburg. All participants completed several questionnaires and had a standardised medical examination. Thereafter, neurophysiological tests such as muscle strength tests and the determination of thermal and vibration thresholds were performed.

**Results** No significant differences were found for temperature and vibration thresholds in dig 2 and 5 bilaterally among the workers. Finger muscle tests (Pinch-grip and 3 Chuck grip) were also of the same magnitude in the right and left hand. Hand grip strength (Jamar), however, was significantly higher in the right hand of the workers.

**Conclusions** Although differences as regards symptoms and neurophysiological test results in the right and left hand of exposed workers have been reported in several studies, the only significant difference noted in this study was a somewhat higher grip strength in the right hand of the workers. That is to be expected, as most of the participants were right handed and therefore probably stronger in their dominant hand.

**1750 VOCAL EFFORT IN TEACHERS: DOSE MEASUREMENTS AND CLASSROOM ACOUSTIC PARAMETERS**

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**Introduction** Literature data show that teachers are exposed to increased risk for diseases of the phonatory apparatus. This circumstance is explained by the high phonatory load of teaching and by classroom noise. As passive acoustic requirements of the school buildings are often not respected, the intelligibility inside the classrooms is poor, increasing the teacher’s voice loudness. This work is aimed at studying relations between long reverberation times, high noise levels and vocal effort.

**Methods** Phonatory effort was evaluated in three school complexes, on a sample of nursery (6 subjects), primary (9), junior high (2) and high (8) school teachers. The classrooms were classified as acoustically treated or not. Speech intelligibility was quantified by the speech transmission index (STI). Phonatory doses were correlated to noise exposure levels and to classroom acoustics. The phonatory effort was evaluated with the Ambulatory Phonation Monitor (Kaypentax).