

**Disability History Month 2020 seminar  #Includeus Logo, company name

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**‘Sick, but not sick enough: Exploring Experiences of Individuals with Rare Neurodiverse Conditions’**

**Tallulah Clark (University of Sheffield) Tuesday 1 December 1- 2pm** [**https://eu.bbcollab.com/guest/abdbcc0490954b3fbb51925ee0223de3**](https://eu.bbcollab.com/guest/abdbcc0490954b3fbb51925ee0223de3)

This paper will draw upon some of the recent work I did for my final year dissertation project. This was a qualitative mixed-methods study exploring the lived experiences of individuals with neurological differences who have found their learning experiences more challenging than the neurotypical majority who dominate society. Two semi-structured interviews were carried out with thematic analysis identifying the tangible and more abstract barriers within the education system, as well as the detrimental effects of stigma and stereotypes. Participants discussed the concept of ‘invisible illness’ as something highly significant in shaping their academic and social experiences. The implications of the study suggest that the education system must do more to encourage students who are eligible to take their place in higher education by supporting their application and continuing to provide necessary guidance throughout their studies. Equally, the findings suggest the need to better equip staff with specific training about neurological differences, ‘invisible’ symptoms, and their implications. This research has the potential for further development, as the conclusions show significant gaps in research around the lived experiences of neurodiverse individuals and there is still a lack of disability awareness.

*Tallulah Clark graduated this year from the University of Sheffield with a BA Education, Culture and Childhood degree. She was awarded the School of Education Undergraduate Dissertation Prize for her research. Tallulah has a blog which talks about her experiences juggling her rare neurodegerative condition called Ataxia and daily life, providing an insight into her thoughts and feelings about navigating her way through society whilst having a disability.*