Why was this work done?

• To determine the effectiveness of interventions for low-incidence populations, including deaf individuals, through single-case design (SCD) studies
• To assess the quality and rigor of SCD research with deaf individuals
• To examine the benefits and challenges of applying standardized research quality criteria from What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) to research with deaf individuals and other diverse populations

How was this work done?

• Using quality criteria from the WWC standards for SCD research, 12 published research articles within deaf studies research were assessed and their experimental quality was evaluated.
• Based on the quality analysis, the studies fell into three categories: (a) meets WWC standards without reservations, (b) meets WWC standards with reservations, and (c) does not meet WWC standards.
• For studies that (a) met standards or (b) met standards with reservations, visual analysis was conducted to determine the strength of evidence demonstrated.

What did researchers find?

• Only 4 out of 12 studies met the standards for WWC design quality due to weaknesses in research methodology, experimental validity, and the stringency of overall design.
• Of the four studies that were assessed with visual analysis, two were determined to have moderate to strong evidence.
• The number of studies that met the WWC standards for design quality was insufficient to identify an evidence-based intervention, program, or practice for the deaf population.

What do these results mean?

• Researchers are called on to produce more rigorous study designs that are sensitive to unique characteristics of the deaf population in order to identify effective interventions and practices.

• Researchers and scholars in deaf studies and deaf education may need to discuss the applicability of WWC standards to SCD research across different contexts.

• The continued use and refinement of WWC standards, coupled with strong theoretical foundation, should lead to a stronger evidence base of interventions and practices within deaf studies.