



Recent Literature Regarding Partner and Adult Caregiver Issues

Predictors of Partner Engagement in PTSD Treatment

Frederic Sautter, Judith A. Lyons, Gina Manguno-Mire, Dana Perry, Xiaotong Han, Michelle Sherman, Leann Myers, Ronald Landis, and Greer Sullivan

Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, Vol. 28, No. 2, June 2006

This study looked at female partners of Vietnam-era PTSD sufferers and how involved the partners were in the care of the PTSD patient. The study used the independent variables of: income, how much the partner felt she was involved in the patient's life, barriers to professional treatment, how important the partner felt professional help was to treating PTSD, how much the partner felt she could control or cope with the patient's emotional problems, and the wife's burden in caring for the PTSD patient. The dependent variable was the wife's involvement in PTSD treatment. The study found income was the best predictor of spousal involvement in treatment, with low-income couples having wives who are much more likely to be engaged in treatment. The second most robust predictor was how much the partner felt involved in the patient's life. Wife's burden in caring for the patient was the third most salient variable.

RELEVANT FOR: Researchers studying caregiver and family issues surrounding PTSD patients.

Psychological and Marital Adjustment in Couples Following a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): A Critical Review

Marie Claude Blais & Jean-Marie Boisvert

Brain Injury, December 2005; 19(14): 1223–1235

This study examines the adjustment married couples must make when one partner suffers a TBI. The articles cited many studies examining marital adjustment following TBI and came up with many disparate results. However, the main theme running through all studies was that TBI is a major challenge for relationships. Several studies found that spouses suffered increased levels of stress, depression, and anxiety. In some cases, spouses of severely impaired TBI patients had increased symptoms, and in some cases, they did not. Partner behavioral problems were a better predictor of spousal psychological distress. Also, TBI tends to have a greater negative impact on spouses than parents of TBI sufferers.

RELEVANT FOR: Family members and marriage/family counselor



Caregiver Stress in Traumatic Brain Injury

Holly Blake

International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation, June 2008, Vol 15, No 6

This literature review is unique in that it both focuses on the positive aspects of caregiving and examines ways to alleviate the psychological distress of being a caregiver for a patient with TBI. Most caregivers report some positive aspects of the caregiving experience, including feeling good about their abilities as a caregiver and happiness in being in the helping role. Parents were more likely than spouses to feel this way. Caregivers who had outside social support were less likely to suffer psychologically ill effects. Also, caregivers who attributed negative behavior exhibited by the patient were more likely to be depressed if they felt the behaviors were motivated by hostility, rather than being a symptom of the TBI. Families that were stable and close before the TBI did better than families that were not close. Also, caregiver respite and education to caregivers were shown to alleviate stress.

RELEVANT FOR: Family members and therapists

Correlates of Depression in Adult Siblings of Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury

Charles Edmund Degeneffe & Ruth Torkelson Lynch

Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin Volume 49, No. 3 (Spring 2006)

This study assessed 170 adult siblings of persons with TBI for depression. It also looked at the characteristics of the siblings that would make them more vulnerable to depression. Almost 39% (38.82%) of adult siblings reported clinically significant levels of depression. Being female and having a depressive episode before the sibling's TBI were significant risk factors. As was found out in other studies, siblings were more likely to become depressed when they perceived less access to social support. The study conflicted with other work when it found that the seriousness of the patient's TBI and burden level of the sibling did not lead to more depressive symptoms in the siblings.

This study is interesting because it shows that some siblings became depressed even when they were not responsible for caregiving.

RELEVANT FOR: Clinicians, especially family therapists

Dr James Bender is a licensed psychologist who joined DCoE via Deloitte Consulting LLP. Dr Bender earned his doctorate in Clinical Psychology in 2006 and just completed his active duty tour in the US Army in December 2009. While in the Army, Dr Bender deployed to Iraq for 12 months as the brigade psychologist for the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, out of Ft Hood. Before the Army, Dr Bender worked as a researcher at the National Opinion Research Center, a social science research firm, and as an adjunct professor of statistics and research methods at Roosevelt University. His areas of expertise include PTSD, Sleep Disorders, and research design/statistical analysis.