

FALL 2023

Brain-e-News

RESOURCES

MOSS REHABILITATION
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
www.mrrl.org

MOSSREHAB RESOURCE NET
www.mossresourcenet.org

THE CENTER FOR OUTCOME
MEASUREMENT IN BRAIN
INJURY
www.tblms.org/combl

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA
WWW.BIAUSA.ORG

BRAIN INJURY RESOURCE LINE
1-800-444-6443

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF
PENNSYLVANIA
www.blapa.org
1-866-635-7097

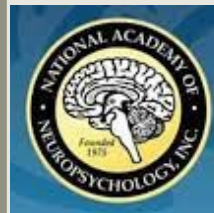
BRAIN INJURY ALLIANCE OF
NEW JERSEY
www.blanj.org
1-732-745-0200
FAMILY HELPLINE
1-800-669-4323

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF
DELAWARE
www.blausa.org/Delaware/bla.htm
1-800-411-0505

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH BRAIN INJURY
HELPLINE
1-866-412-4755
TTY 1-877-232-7640

MODEL SYSTEM KNOWLEDGE
TRANSLATION CENTER (MSKTC)
www.msktc.org

www.BrainInLine.org



The Moss TBIMS Team is Presenting at the National Academy of Neuropsychology



Standing L to R: Lauren Krasucki, Umesh Venkatesan. Seated L to R: Amanda Rabinowitz, Alissa Kerr

The mission of the National Academy of Neuropsychology (NAN) is to advance neuropsychology as a science and health profession, to promote human welfare, and to generate and disseminate knowledge of brain-behavior relationships. NAN's annual conference is being held in Philadelphia this Fall, providing the opportunity for Moss TBIMS researchers to attend and present research findings that are hot off the presses. Academic conferences provide an invaluable platform for scholars and researchers to present their work, receive constructive feedback, and refine their ideas, contributing to their professional growth.

From Dr. Amanda Rabinowitz's lab, Dr. Lauren Krasucki will present a poster on the role of pre-injury personality on engagement in inpatient rehabilitation following

moderate to severe TBI. Dr. Krasucki's findings suggest that higher levels of pre-injury impulsivity are associated with lower levels of engagement in physical therapy sessions. Alissa Kerr will be presenting a poster with preliminary results from a randomized controlled trial of Behavioral Activation (BA) treatment for depression and/or anxiety after moderate to severe TBI. BA involves scheduling valued activities to increase participants' experience of reward—feelings of pleasure and accomplishments. Ms. Kerr's analysis revealed a significant positive impact of activity scheduling on reducing negative emotions and increasing feelings of accomplishment. Dr. Umesh Venkatesan will also be serving as the discussant for a paper session on Neuropsychological and Neuropsychiatric research.



Lyn Turkstra Visits MRRI to Launch Clinical Knowledge Translation Project

Scientific exchange and collaboration are often critical for developing and advancing world-class research programs. This was the motivation behind the development of MRRI's Scientist in Residence program. Last month, MRRI was excited to welcome Lyn Turkstra, PhD, CCC-SLP, BC-NCD(A), for an in-person visit to the Institute. Dr. Turkstra is a Professor in the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University, and she has been a Scientist in Residence at MRRI since 2019. During her visit, Dr. Turkstra connected with MRRI researchers including MRRI Associate Director, Amanda Rabinowitz, PhD, to work on collaborative research projects focused on cognition and communication after brain injury.



Amanda Rabinowitz (L) and Lyn Turksra (R)

Drs. Rabinowitz and Turkstra are working with colleagues in the Jefferson Moss-Magee Drucker Brain Injury Center (DBIC) in an effort to translate leading-edge research in brain injury rehabilitation to evidence-based clinical practice, as part of a Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems knowledge translation project. In the previous Model System cycle, they successfully developed and implemented the MossRehab PTA Protocol for identifying patients with amnesia after traumatic brain injury (post-traumatic amnesia; PTA), educating staff and families about the patient's memory deficit, and training the most effective means of communicating with affected patients to maximize their engagement in rehabilitation and their emotional well-being.

Based on feedback from frontline clinicians, their present work will build on this success, and develop a program to systematically train staff how best to maximize learning and performance for patients with a full spectrum of memory abilities, across the diverse content areas involved in inpatient rehabilitation. This work will involve application of the Rehabilitation Treatment Specification System (RTSS), a framework for defining and categorizing rehabilitation treatments, that was developed under the leadership of MRRI scientists in collaboration with Dr. Turkstra and others. The new training program will identify what patients need to learn based on RTSS-defined domains of treatment targets (organ function, performance of skills and habits, and mental representations) as well as the key ingredients or clinical actions that should be included in treatment.

EMPOWERMENT GROUP



The Elkins Park Empowerment Group will be saying goodbye to Debbi Eisen (pictured left) after countless years of service. We are immensely grateful to her for cultivating a nurturing and supportive environment for the brain injury community. We wish Debbi all the best with her new endeavors!

It is our pleasure to introduce ourselves as the new facilitators of the group - Kelsey McIntyre, a speech-language pathologist at the Community Re-Entry Program and Madison Burrows, an occupational therapist at the Elkins Park Outpatient Program. We are thrilled to embark on this journey and collaborate with such an extraordinary group!

The Empowerment Group meets on the second Monday of each month from 5-6:30 virtually. For more information, please contact Kelsey McIntyre by email at Kelsey.mcintyre@jefferson.edu, or by phone 215-456-9397.

Does Life Adversity Early in Life Relate to Health after Brain Injury?

[Umesh Venkatesan, PhD](#), who directs the [Brain Trauma and Behavior \(BraTBehavior\) Laboratory](#), recently completed a project examining social factors that may affect the recovery of adults with traumatic brain injury (TBI). This work is funded by the Albert Einstein Society, and it focuses on early life experiences that may shape how individuals recover from TBI sustained in adulthood.

The study examined adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), negative experiences a person experiences in their home or community before the age of 18. Examples of these are violence in the home and bullying in the community. Eighty-five individuals who had sustained moderate-to-severe TBI in adulthood and were at least one year into their recovery were asked about these ACEs in one-on-one interviews.

Results showed that ACEs are quite prevalent in individuals with TBI: over 3/4ths of individuals reported at least one household-related ACE, and nearly 2/3rds reported at least one neighborhood-related ACEs. Emotional abuse, physical abuse, and alcohol problems in a family member were the most common household-related ACEs, while witnessing violence was by far the most common community-related ACE. Greater numbers of ACEs reported were associated with poorer mental health, and poorer health-related quality of life. These findings align with prior research suggesting that ACEs may place people at an increased risk for TBI, and, for the first time, comprehensively characterize the type of ACEs people are experiencing and how they impact post-injury health.

Dr. Venkatesan hopes this research encourages healthcare professionals to consider the entirety of an individual's life in TBI rehabilitation, not just the details of their injury and how it affects functioning from that point forward. These findings show the value of taking a "life course" approach to treatment that considers the individual as a combination of *all* their life experiences, including, but certainly not limited to, their brain injury. Dr. Venkatesan adds, "Because social issues like adversity may have been negatively influencing life before injury, there's no reason to believe these factors are going to stop influencing a person's health after brain injury. If anything, the injury might make already tough situations worse. The good news is that with an awareness of these issues on a patient-by-patient basis, providers may be able to better personalize care and help individuals maximize their quality of life."



MossRehab at Elkins Park Hospital
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Elkins Park, PA 19027
ATTN: Lauren Krasucki



The Moss TBI Model System

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research has designated MossRehab as a Model System for traumatic brain injury since 1997. The TBI Model System program seeks to improve lives by creating and disseminating new knowledge about the course, treatment and outcomes of TBI.

**The Traumatic
Brain Injury
Model System
(TBIMS) Centers
for the current
funding cycle
(2022-2027)**

Current Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems

