Subjective Quality of Life Following Traumatic Brain Injury

Abstract:
Subjective quality of life (SQOL) is an important indicator of outcome following traumatic brain injury (TBI). However, relatively little research has been conducted in this area. Recent international consensus groups have assisted in defining key aspects of this construct, recommended essential characteristics of SQOL measures and called for foundational research to proceed. The present research was undertaken in conjunction with the Neurotrauma Register of Tasmania, which has been conducting prospective population-based data collection since 2003. In this paper, a brief overview of current issues in the TBI/SQOL area will lead to an overview of the Quality of Life Inventory (QOLI, Frisch 1994) and presentation of results of our recent TBI outcome research. We have found slight differences between the pre-injury estimates of a local cohort of 470 participants and the QOLI’s US-based normative distribution. As such, corrections are provided to clinical classification ranges for local application. We have also confirmed a three-factor structure for the QOLI and examined outcomes at four time-points to 12 months following injury, for a sample of 663 adults. A significant decrease in mean SQOL rating was observed at one and three months following injury compared with pre-injury estimates and mean scores were seen to return to near pre-injury levels by six months following injury. This research will likely be of interest to clinicians, service managers and researchers working in neurological rehabilitation.