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Aging and Participation after Spinal Cord Injury: Promoting Utilization to Enhance Community Outcomes



“Over 50% of the group had a history of substance abuse, and 94% reported moderate or severe pain”

Health, Employment and Longevity Project Aging and Participation after SCI Study NEWS & UPDATES

Research Highlight

Mediating Effects of Pain Interference on the Relationships Between Pain Intensity and Probable Major Depression Among Participants with Spinal Cord Injury

Introduction

Pain and depression are highly prevalent secondary health conditions in persons with spinal cord injury (SCI). We aimed to test whether pain interference, or the extent to which pain interferes with a person's life and daily activities, explains (i.e., mediates) the relationship between pain intensity and probable major depression (PMD) among individuals with SCI, when considering personal and injury characteristics, resilience, and pain medication use.

Key Findings

- Of 4670 participants, approximately 25% of participants endorsed PMD, whereas 44.4% reported no or minimal depressive symptoms.
- When considering the entire sample, participants endorsed moderate average pain intensity.
- Participants with PMD were younger, had less time since SCI onset, had lower resilience scores, greater pain intensity, and greater pain interference.
- Greater pain intensity was associated with greater pain interference. Greater pain intensity was associated with PMD. Greater pain interference was associated with PMD.
- Pain interference completely accounted for the relationship between pain intensity and PMD regardless of whether the participant used pain medications daily, occasionally, or not at all.
- Resilience was supported as a protective factor, as persons with greater resilience were less likely to develop PMD regardless of pain medication use frequency.

Conclusion

Pain intensity was associated with PMD and the relationship was mediated by pain interference. Clinicians should assess pain interference when screening for PMD and consider treatment options that reduce pain interference. Treatment options that may support resilience or improve resilience may further reduce risk of PMD.

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Study Updates

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Our Qualitative Aim is to identify aging related changes in participation, barriers and facilitators to maintaining participation, and strategies to promote successful participation from the perspective of those with the full range of lived experience with SCI. This will be done to help us understand successful participation and identify items that may ultimately be incorporated into the quantitative, self-report assessments that will be obtained in the larger second phase of the project.

We have collected the qualitative data for this study. We have enrolled 46 par-

ticipants who completed virtual focus groups, each of which was comprised of an average of 4-5 people with SCI.

We are in the process of finalizing the quantitative self-assessment. On 7/28/2022, we hosted a Consumer Advisory Panel meeting to review potential self-report questions in order to get feedback from the panel. The quantitative data collection stage of our study is scheduled to start in the fall of 2022.

ASCIP Conference Opening Keynote Speaker



Dr. James Krause was the keynote speaker at 2022 ASCIP Conference

On September 9, 2022, Dr. James Krause was the opening keynote speaker at the 2022 The Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals (ASCIP) Hybrid Conference in Kansas City MO. His speech theme centered on “The challenges, pitfalls, and triumphs of those with spinal cord injury: 50 years of research”



Recent Publications

The following manuscripts were recently accepted to be published in upcoming issues of *Topics in Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation* and *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*.

Clark, J. M. R., Twamley, E. W., & Krause, J. S. (2021). Mental health, pain, and sleep factors associated with subjective cognitive difficulties in individuals with spinal cord injury. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 66, 248-256.

Clark, J. M. R., & Krause, J. S. (2022). Life satisfaction in individuals with long-term traumatic spinal cord injury: An investigation of associated biopsychosocial factors. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 103, 98-105.