

THE LIFESPAN:

Social Role Return Following Brain Injury

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Educational Goals

Develop an understanding of social role return following a brain injury.
Examine the neurological and psychological components of social role.
Identify barriers related to the person and the system which influence social role return following a disability
Examine social role return issues across the lifespan

Disability and the Future

As advances in medical technologies and survivorship rates increase, we'll see an increase—as well as new challenges—in healthcare delivery.

Brain Injury and Youth

After a brain injury, a child experiences loss of friendships, social isolation, and increased dependences on their family. They are also at a greater risk for mental health issues:

- Only 20% return to his/her grade level
- 40% required program changes
- 40% required psychological support
- 60% experienced a modified social role
(*NRIO Outcome Study, 1993-2007*)

About Social Role

Social role is a network of mutuality based on participation.
Perspectives of self and mind affect both positive and negative roles.
Is social role behavior influenced by a person's brain injury?
(see *Stuss, Henry, Bibby & McDonald*)

Mental Health and Brain Injury

Social role challenges produce mental health issues for those with brain injury:
57% experience anxiety & depression
(*Douglas & Spellacy 2000, Prigatano 1996, Shulman 1997, Klonoff & Tate 1995, Morton & Wehman 1995, Teasdale & Engberg 2000*)

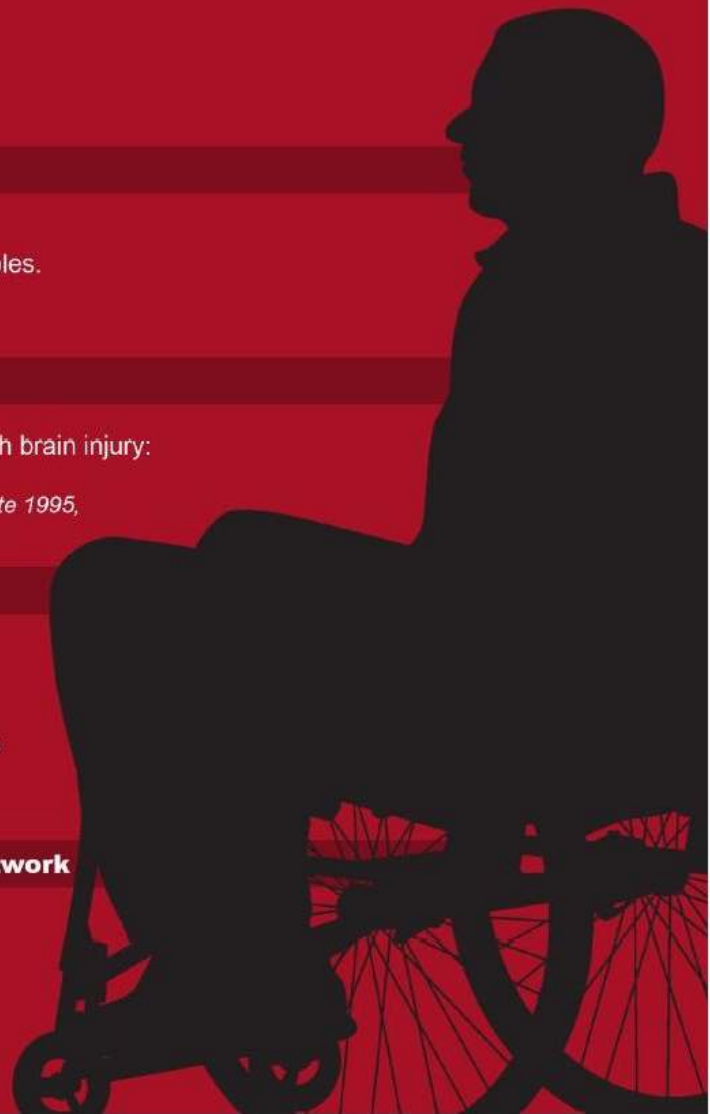
The Ten Years After Injury

Rehabilitation is an ongoing process:

- Up to 36% report substance abuse post-injury
- Up to 33% report legal problems relating to behavioral issues
- Up to 45% report marital/relational complications
- Up to 88% report problems maintaining friendships

Social Role and Brain Injury: Individual & Social Network

Social networks change size and complicated over time.
Brain injury brings about a "distancing effect" and loss of interpersonal connectivity.



Personal Functions & Social Network Performance

The three domains of function and social return are: emotional, physical, and cognitive.
The four components of a social network are: friends, family, work, and community.

Apathy and depression are neuropsychiatric features of brain injury. Of those individuals with brain injury:

- 57% experience clinically significant depression
- 50% experience anxiety and depression after a severe TBI
- 61% report depression 7 years or more after injury.
- 66% report apathy
- 75% are unemployed
- 90% are dissatisfied with their social life
- 47% are not using the telephone
- 27% are not socializing at home

As the person experiences a cognitive decline through aging, the risk for dementia and neuroendocrine disorders increase.

Long Term Issues

As survival rates increase, there are fewer resources available. Today, individuals are surviving increasingly severe brain injuries, which require greater care costs. For those experiencing severe brain injury:

- 35% reported unmet needs
- 43% report long-term disability
- Greater risk for falls, seizures, and 2nd brain injury

Aging and TBI

Brain injury accelerates the rate of decline while aging:

- 68% report nervousness
- 29% have a psychiatric disturbance
- Support and care needs increase

Caregiver Resources

The death of a caregiver often signals a period of significant instability. Aging with a disability requires greater costs and is complicated by barriers to social reintegration, a lack of resources, restrictive settings, and divergent treatment.

Steps for Action

1. Recognize the barriers in the rehabilitation phase
2. Train for support and caregiver systems
3. Identify resources that address co-occurring issues
4. Participate in meaningful activities
5. Develop extended support networks in the community that address the lifespan
6. Correct the issues which maintain disability-related poverty and health disparity

About the Presenter:

Dr. Rolf B. Gainer is the Chief Executive Officer at Brookhaven Hospital and the founder of the Neurologic Rehabilitation Institute of Ontario and the Neurologic Rehabilitation Institute at Brookhaven. Visit us online at:

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