Conference Presentation Abstract

Title:

School Reintegration for Children and Youth with Acquired Brain Injury

Primary Author:

Dawn Good, Brock University (St. Catharines)

Additional Authors:

Peter Rumney; Janette McDougall; Sheila Bennett; Rhonda Martinussen; Carole DeMatteo; Patricia McKeever; Denise Guerriere; Sue Loyst; John Kumpf; Nancy DeCourville

Summary:

Acquired brain injury (ABI) in school-aged children and youth results in serious disruption to new and previously learned skills, and interuption to neurological development, both of which affect students' functional outcomes (Galvin & Mandalis, 2009). Injury severity and neuropsychological test scores are single handedly not the best predictors of outcome for children and youth with ABI. The child's environment, participation, and community integration are particularly critical for physical, social, behavioural, and cognitive functioning (Ehrenfors, Borell & Hemmingsson, 2009; Wells, Mines, & Phillips, 2009). Since the school environment is predominately where students spend most of their time and experience changes and growth in their functional abilities, educators are influential in a student's neural progress and recovery. To that end, their knowledge and support is critical for fostering student development. Improvements in children's academic participation and social acceptance are expected when functional behaviour assessment, theory, and education incorporating intervention plans into classroom practice are used (Feeney & Ylvisaker, 2008; Davis, 2003; Ylvisaker & Feeney, 2003) as well as, considerations of familial support, environmental factors, and pre-injury status (Fay, Yeates, Drotar, Wade & Stancin, 2009; Bennett & Wynne, 2006).

However, to date, no critical evaluation of the types of successful supports being used has been empirically examined. The current study involves a province-wide multi-centred approach (involving cooperation amongst Ontario 's Children's Treatments Centres, School Boards' principals and teachers, children/youth who have experienced ABI and their family who have been selected for participation through representative sampling). We provide a (statistical) model of the factors that influence a students' successful reintegration (as defined by academic, socio-emotional, and interpersonal success) and their relative contribution to predicting the students' outcomes by investigating several measures regarding the student (severity of injury, academic performance pre- and post-injury, neurocognitive and behavioural/emotional status), the school system (policy and procedures with respect to service delivery, teacher knowledge, attitudes, instructional approach) and the family (perspective, coping).

Learning Objectives:

We provide a (statistical) model of the factors that influence a students' successful reintegration (as defined by academic, socio-emotional, and interpersonal success) and their relative contribution to predicting the students' outcomes by investigating several measures regarding the student (severity of injury, academic performance pre- and post-injury, neurocognitive and behavioural/emotional status), the school system (policy and procedures with respect to service delivery, teacher knowledge, attitudes, instructional approach) and the family (perspective, coping).