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An innovative treatment approach for mild traumatic brain injury: Concussion

According to the WHO and the CDC, Traumatic Brain Injury is one of the major causes of death and disability around the world. In the United States over 50,000 lives are lost every year, with hundreds of thousands afflicted with lasting disabilities. Many practitioners lack familiarity with concussion, and have limited access to resources. The Schurig Center for Brain Injury Recovery, a non-profit center near San Francisco, California, has created an innovative range of services to address the needs of adults who have sustained Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI or Concussion). The Center's mTBI treatment program consists of several components: 1) The Re-source Center, 2) The Post-Concussion Education and Support Group, 3) The Individualized Computer Treatment Program (ICTP), and 4) "Cog-Smart" - a compensatory skills training class. The Center also provides a separate full-day Therapeutic Program for moderate to severe brain injury. The aim of the Post-Concussion Education and Support Group is to improve knowledge about mTBI, provide resources of support or care in the community, and address the altered sense of self. The efficacy of this group treatment method for post-concussion syndrome was determined through pre- and post-treatment assessment data collected over two years, from 32 patients who participated in successive treatment groups of 7-8 patients each, facilitated by a neuropsychologist and meeting once monthly over four months. Participants responded to questions about their concussion knowledge, level of perceived psychological support, "brain health habits," feelings of isolation, and overall coping ability. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests conducted on this data, showed significant improvement pre-treatment to post-treatment (at the 0.05 level) in all areas (z values ranging from - 3.9235 to - 4.1399) except for the isolation question (z = -1.5533). Treatment implications of these findings are explored.

Biography

James Wilson, Ph.D. obtained his doctorate in Rehabilitation Psychology from the University of Arizona. He has been practicing as a licensed psychologist in California for thirty-two years, specializing in neuropsychology and brain injury rehabilitation. He presently is a clinical consultant for the Schurig Center for Brain Injury Recovery. His specialty in private practice is neuropsychological evaluation of TBI and Concussion, and he has published on Mild Traumatic Brain Injury. In the late 1970's he worked for three years in hospital settings in Hokkaido, Japan.

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