

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The 2008 Galveston Brain Injury Conference will focus on the areas of aging and the aged in individuals with traumatic brain injury. The information that will be presented is the result of a collaborative effort between the faculty of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine led by Wayne Gordon, PhD and Marcel Dijkers, Ph.D.; the Transitional Learning at Galveston, led by Beatriz Abreu, PhD; and the Center for Rehabilitation Sciences in the School of Allied Health at the University of Texas Medical Branch, led by Kenneth Ottenbacher, PhD.

TBI survivors often ask “What is going to happen to me? How will this injury impact my health and well being?” Unfortunately, little is known about growing older with TBI. How does rehabilitation care and outcome differ for TBI when occurring in the elderly than for TBI of similar severity occurring earlier in life? TBI in the elderly also raises issues involving differential diagnoses as it is often difficult to differentiate between TBI and dementia or between the confusion/disorientation in a recently injured older person and the delusional state of an elderly individual.

Following presentation of the results of five systematic reviews focused on growing older with TBI, and the onset of TBI in the elderly, participants will join in group discussion lead by experts in the field. Facilitated small discussion groups organized around sub-topics from within the reviews will follow the presentation of the results of the reviews. The purpose will be to critique the reviews and to prioritize research needs. The outcome of the small group discussions will be presented to the larger group during the conference. A final group session will summarize the small group discussions and look to the future for research proposals that have the potential of filling many of the gaps identified in the systematic reviews.