

Using the ICF to Understand Challenges in Community Reintegration of Injured Military Service Members

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Background

- Over 1.5 million US soldiers, sailors, and marines have been deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

Background



- Combat Casualties
 - Use of body armor that protects the torso, but not the brain or extremities
 - IED Devices
 - Multiple and severe injuries
 - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
 - Polytraumatic Injury
 - TBI & injury to other body parts or systems

Blast Injuries





Background

- Less Severe Combat Casualties
 - High frequency of musculoskeletal injuries

- “Invisible Casualties”
 - Mental Health problems
 - Prevalence of PTSD estimated to be between 11.3-19.1%

Background

- Little is known about the impact of injury type and severity on community reintegration



Community Reintegration



- Community reintegration can be viewed as the return of individuals to their age, gender and culture appropriate role **function**

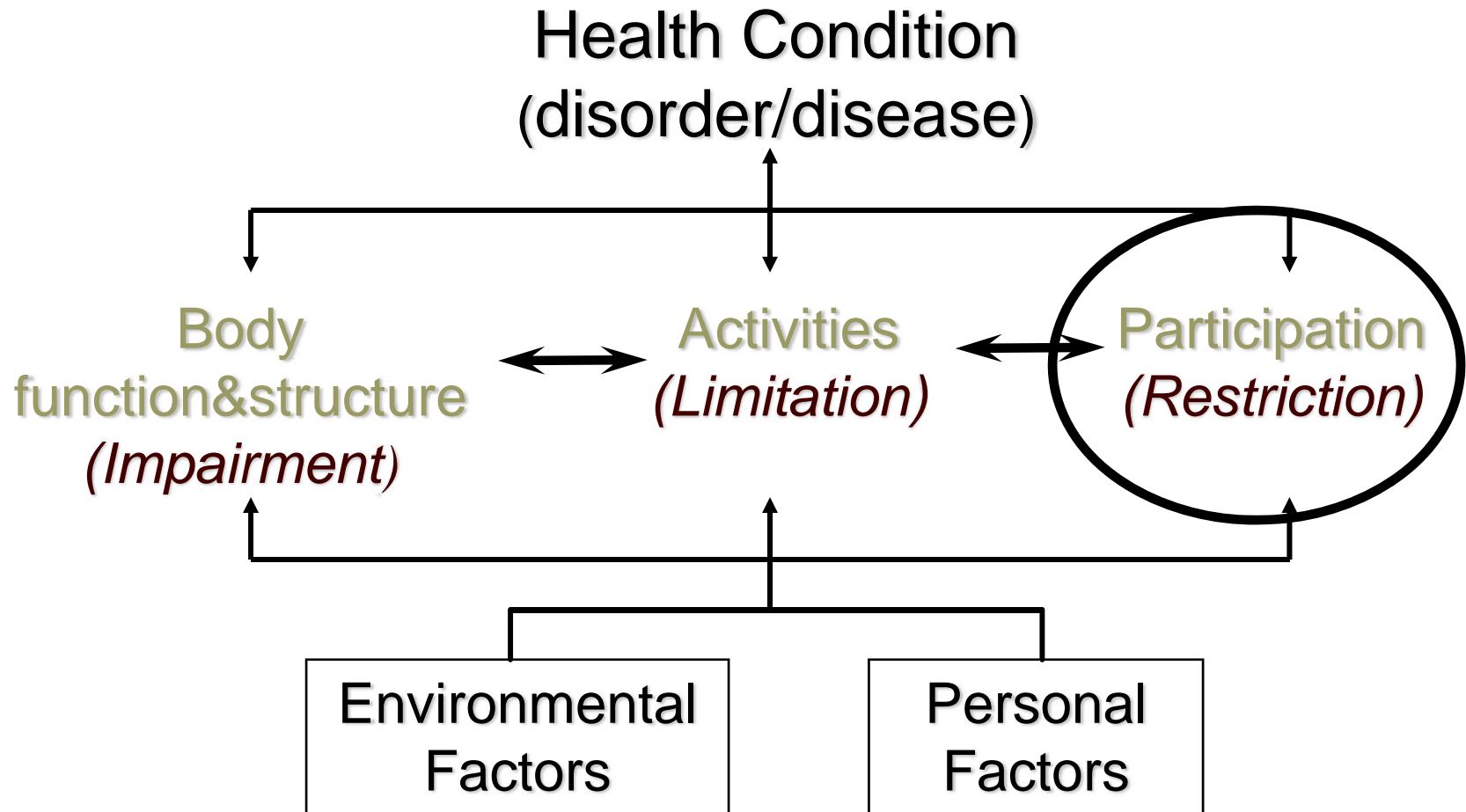




Background

- We believed that the ICF construct of participation would be ideal for understanding community reintegration.
- Participation focuses on the person's involvement in society.

ICF Model





ICF: Activities and Participation

□ **Nine domains:**

- 1. Learning and Applying Knowledge**
- 2. General Tasks and Demands**
- 3. Communication**
- 4. Mobility**
- 5. Self-care**
- 6. Domestic Life**
- 7. Interpersonal Relationships**
- 8. Major Life Areas**
- 9. Community, Social and Civic life**



Objectives

1. To demonstrate the utility of the ICF for understanding community reintegration issues of OEF/OIF service members
2. To demonstrate the applicability of the ICF classification system across injury types
By comparing and contrasting service members with and without polytraumatic injuries.



Participants

- Veterans, caregivers, and clinicians
- Recruited from:
 - Veterans Administration (VA) medical centers
 - VA regional offices
 - National Guard
 - Community



Participants

- 14 injured OIF/OEF combat veterans
- 14 caregivers
- 12 clinicians (key informants)

Participants

□ Veterans:

- 12 men
- 2 women
- 4 diagnosed with TBI
- 3 blast injuries/concussions but no TBI Dx

□ Caregivers

- 2 men
- 10 women
- 3 caregivers interviewed, but veteran not interviewed



Clinicians from Diverse Fields

- Neuropsychology
- Physical medicine & rehabilitation
- General internal medicine
- Psychology
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Recreational therapy
- Vocational rehabilitation



Data Collection

Veterans and Caregivers

- Semi-structured tape-recorded interviews
 - Discussed challenges in daily life, mobility, activities at home, in the neighborhood and in the community, family and social life, and work life.

Clinicians

- Semi-structured interviews
 - Discussed common challenges in community reintegration that they had observed.

Data Analysis

- Interviews and memos converted into text files
- Imported in NViVo software
- Two investigators analyzed the data
- Coded using a directed content analysis
 - Using the ICF taxonomy
- Analysis discussed, compared
- Analysts reached agreement



Data Analysis

- Data further classified into ICF Level II or III subcategories
- Issues scrutinized using the constant comparison method
- Data collection, categorization and analysis was performed concurrently
- Data collection continued until no new issues were identified in the last 2 interviews



Data Analysis

- Because the purpose of this study was to understand role function, we did not code challenges which fell into the domains of body structures or functions, environment or personal factors.

Activities or. Participation?

- Approach #4 Annex 3 of the ICF
- We considered all codes as both activities and participation
 - Dependent upon the content considering
 - Simple tasks and actions considered activities
 - Complex functional tasks and actions considered participation.



Data Analysis

- Accuracy and trustworthiness enhanced by:
 - Use of source triangulation
 - Thick description
 - Audit trail of analytic decisions

Findings

Using the International Classification of Function to Understand the Challenges in Community Reintegration of Injured Service Members

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Learning & Applying Knowledge

- d1551 Acquiring complex skills
- d160 Focusing attention
- d175 Solving problems
- d166 Reading

D160 Focusing Attention

- *He's very unfocused VERY unfocused. For him to read that document you just gave me on Monday that would stress him out.....I can prepare him and say they're going to give you a 4 page document that you need to sign, explain to him what it is. He will lose half of what I'm saying to him by the time I'm done.*

- Caregiver

D175 Decision Making

- *If he was to go to get groceries... he will call me three or four times to make sure that he is getting all the right things even though he has it in a PDA...It is the small things he can't determine if he should go ahead and do it or not.....It could be a lack of confidence, but I think it is more a lack of knowing, just being able to have the judgment, the judgment is impaired.*

-Mother of Veteran with Polytraumatic Injuries



General Tasks & Demands

- d220 Undertaking multiple tasks
- d230 Carrying out daily routine
- d2401 Handling stress



D230 Carrying out Daily Routine

People start something then get side tracked and get pin-balled throughout the day, leaving a trail of unfinished business.

- Clinician



Communication

- d330-349 Communicating-producing
- d3501 Sustaining a conversation



D330-349 Communicating-producing

A lot of times he uses the wrong word.... he will look at a toaster and call it a microwave, he just comes up with the wrong words and sometimes, it ends up being offensive to someone.

-Caregiver of Veteran with Polytraumatic Injury



Mobility

- d4060 Moving around in different locations
- d470 Using transportation
- d475 Driving

D475 Driving

I've seen items -- it was just regular garbage.... It seemed like something that was going to possibly cause harm to somebody, and I felt a need to just get away from it... It's like, you hold onto the steering wheel real hard, like I'm waiting for another bomb to go off or something, and then I'd just -- I didn't even look to see if anybody was near me, and I just rammed off to the side and came around it, just to get away from it. And you step on the gas, just speed right by it.

-Veteran



Self-care

- d500 General self care
- d5702 Maintaining one's health

D5702 Maintaining one's health

It is fairly common for patients to buy motorcycles to continue living on the edge. Driving too fast and drinking and driving are problems. Thus, there are risks of accidents, deaths, legal problems due to DUI and speeding tickets.

-Clinician



Domestic Life

- d600 General domestic life
- d630 Preparing meals
- d640 Doing housework
- d650 Caring for household objects



Domestic Life

- Some veterans, particularly those with polytraumatic injuries, can no longer perform their role as parents.
- The stimulation level and multi-tasking involved in childcare are particularly challenging.



Interpersonal Relationships

- d7102 Tolerance in relationships
- d7104 Social cues in relationships
- d7105 Physical contact in relationships
- d7200 Forming relationships
- d7202 Regulating behaviors in interactions
- d750 Informal social relationships
- d760 Family relationships
- d770 Intimate relationships

D7102 Tolerance

I just have low tolerance for stupid stuff. God, about a month ago I was in McDonald's with a friend of mine and the lady in front of us was just taking forever, and um I was just like, I'm like, 'Christ, lady, it's the same menu in every McDonald's all over the country. Like order something or get out of the way.' And everybody... in the restaurant just kind of looked at me, and she moved out of the way and we ordered and that was that.

- Veteran

D7105 Physical contact in relationships

When I first got home when I was at Fort Drum, I was there about two months uh.. this kid bumped into me in the local mall and I just started developing an attitude. He wasn't watching where he was going. I laid him out cold.

-Veteran



Major Life Areas

- d845 Acquiring, keeping and terminating a job
- d8451 Maintaining a job
- d8452 Terminating a job
- d865 Complex economic transactions



D8451 Maintaining a job

But now I struggle to hold a job... My attention span's very short.... I was working a couple jobs and I just wasn't happy, so I just quit cause I wasn't happy, And I want to be happy. That's all I want to do is to be happy, you know. That's all I ask for.

-Veteran



Community, Social & Civic

- d910 Community life
- d920 Recreation and Leisure
- d950 Political life and citizenship

Community Social and Civic:

Social isolation

I used to love going out before. Even if it was just going out to the mall, to look around or something. Now, I go out when I need to.. If I go to get say, like food, like Taco Bell or whatever, I won't go inside, I'll go through the drive through. Ah.. my tolerance for dealing with people ... I don't like crowds, it's like I kinda just want to be left alone.

-Veteran



Discussion

- The ICF framework of participation provided a comprehensive lens through which to understand the challenges in role participation faced by injured veterans as they reintegrated into the community.



Discussion

- Given the findings from our study and the combined prevalence of TBI and PTSD in OEF/OIF veterans, we believe that there are a substantial number who are at risk of poor community reintegration.



Limitations

- Small, convenience sample of veterans seeking treatment at VA facilities
- May not be representative



Significance

- Data from this pilot study was used to develop an ICF-based measure of community reintegration for OIF/OEF veterans.
- The full scope of participation limitations in the OIF/OEF veteran population will only be appreciated through a study that measures community reintegration and employs a random sample of the population.



Thank-you

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