How can we beat depression?

*Does early interdisciplinary control have a preventive impact on the risk of developing a depression after an acquired brain injury? - preliminary results*

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Background
In addition to the physical and cognitive sequelae, many people with an acquired brain injury (ABI) struggle with depressive symptoms. Studies have reported a prevalence around 30% for developing a depressive disorder after ABI or stroke (Bullock et al., 2015) (Schöttke, H. and Giabbiconi, CM, 2015). A new review has shown an increase in the prevalence of depression over time after a TBI (Scholten, A.C., et al., in press).

According to young people with ABI, Battista et al. (2014) found a connection between depression and health related quality of life in youth post-TBI.

Method
The Ministry of Health and Elderly in Denmark has made a special initiative towards young people, years 15 - 30 with an acquired brain injury. Five regional outpatient clinics offer the young people an interdisciplinary examination. 

Subcategories: Young people between 15-30 years living in North Region Denmark with a diagnosis of possible ABI (TBI, Brain tumor, stroke, encephalopathy or CNS infection) were included in the study.

The discharging hospital department or the general practitioner referred patients to the clinic. The patients were both newly diagnosed patients and patients with an older injury.

Furthermore, we sent a letter to newly diagnosed patients who were not referred to the clinic within one month after discharge.

Unfortunately, data from all five regions in Denmark were not available, and the population is smaller than expected. Because of few one-year controls, we decided to focus on the prevalence of depression and the need for rehabilitation at the first visit in the outpatient clinic.

Results
There is a difference between the prevalence of patients meeting the diagnostic criteria for depression ICD-10 and the rating scale with cutoff on 20 points (36%). The prevalence according to the rating scale correspond to the prevalence reported in other studies.

Even though only 1/3 of the patients with depressive symptoms meet the diagnostic criteria for a depression, the presence of the depressive symptoms can complicate their rehabilitation and many of the patients need treatment for their depressive symptoms.

Discussion:
Young people living in North Region Denmark with a diagnosis that might cause a brain injury have a high risk of developing depressive symptoms. This is seen both when using the diagnostic criteria according to ICD-10 (31%) and the rating scale with cutoff on 20 points (36%).

The data shows that 75% of the patient seen within one year after discharge, have a need for rehabilitation. 2/3 of those got a prescription for rehabilitation, which means that they did not get training when they came to the clinic.

This result indicates that young people with an acquired brain injury living in North Region Denmark will benefit from an interdisciplinary examination after discharge.

The results cannot tell which factors affects the risk of developing a depression after ABI. And it cannot tell how the connection is between depressive symptoms and need for rehabilitation.

Conclusions and perspectives

• Young people between 15-30 years with an ABI have a high of developing depressive symptoms.
• There are a difference between prevalence of depression and depressive symptoms when comparing the diagnostic criteria according to ICD-10 and the rating scale.
• Many young people with an acquired brain injury have unmet need of rehabilitation.
• The results indicates a connection between the need of rehabilitation and higher level of depressive symptoms.
• Young people with an acquired brain injury living in North Region Denmark will benefit from an interdisciplinary examination after discharge.

The results have raised further questions to answer:
• How do we diagnose depression after an acquired brain injury?
• Do young people with an acquired brain injury differ from other age groups in case of depressive symptoms and rehabilitation needs?
• How can the rehabilitation units and teams prevent the development of depressive symptoms?
• How do sequelae after an acquired brain injury and depressive symptoms affect quality of life among young people with an acquired brain injury?

References:

