



17th Annual Brain Injury Conference

February 7, 2025 | Automotive Building, Exhibition Place

Poster #: 7

Abstract Title: A Qualitative Study to Inform the Development of a Mild Traumatic Brain Injury and Concussion Screening Protocol for Rehabilitation Trauma Inpatients

Author(s): Yomna E. Ahmed¹, Zoe Li¹, Lesley Gotlib Conn³, Peter Broadhurst², Marina B. Wasilewski², Matthew Burke^{1,2}, Lawrence R. Robinson¹, Sander L. Hitzig¹, Barbara Haas¹

Organization/Affiliation: Sunnybrook Research Institute¹, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre², Tory Trauma Program³

ABSTRACT:

Abstract Theme: Mild TBI / Concussion

Topic(s) of Interest: Best Practices, Clinical Research

Purpose of Project: Mild traumatic brain injuries (mTBI) or concussions are frequently under-diagnosed, as initial care often prioritizes addressing immediate, life-threatening injuries during the acute phase. This qualitative study explores trauma care healthcare professionals' perspectives to identify practical and clinically meaningful methods for diagnosing mTBI/concussions in the rehabilitation setting.

Methods, Procedure, Results/Outcome, Conclusion:

Methods: An qualitative study was conducted with healthcare professionals (HCPs) working in trauma and/or mTBI across major acute care and rehabilitation hospitals in the Greater Toronto Area. Insights were gathered from 20 providers through semi-structured interviews that explored their perspectives and experiences with identifying mTBI/concussions in post-acute settings. Interview questions focused on the scope of missed mTBI/concussion cases, impacts on clinical service delivery and patient outcomes, and recommendations for feasible and clinically meaningful screening measures. All interviews were transcribed, and data analysis was done using codebook thematic analysis.

Results: HCP representation included professionals from neurology, trauma surgery, physical medicine and rehabilitation, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, patient coordination, social work, nursing, and speech and language therapy. Four main themes were identified from the data: (1) the prevalence of missed mTBI/C; (2) the challenges of identifying and managing mTBI/C; (3) current approaches to identifying and managing mTBI/C, and; (4) recommendations for improving mTBI/C identification and management.

Conclusion: Our qualitative research highlights the complexities healthcare providers face in identifying and managing mTBI/concussions at the patient, practice, and system levels. The findings reveal significant variability in diagnostic methods and approaches across different care settings and disciplines, underscoring the need for standardized protocols and improved interdisciplinary communication to optimize mTBI/concussion care.