

Quick Review of Model System Research

The Impact of Self-Awareness and Depression on Subjective Reports of Memory, Quality-of-Life, and Satisfaction With Life Following TBI ¹

What is the study about?

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) may impact one's self-awareness of emotional and behavioral functioning. This study looked at how changes in self-awareness and depression affect what people with TBI report about their memory, health-related quality-of-life (QoL), and satisfaction with life.

Who participated in the study?

The study group included 20 men and 10 women, 20–54 years of age. Each person had sustained a TBI at least 1 year before the study. Two-thirds of the group had suffered severe TBI. All members lived in the community, but not all received special help. None of the group members had a history of stroke, neurological disease, major psychiatric illness, or substance abuse. Some were students, others were employed, and many were on disability. A spouse, child, parent, sibling, or caregiver served as an informant for each member of the study group.

How was the study conducted?

Participants were recruited through clinics and local TBI support groups. Each member signed a written consent and went through 2–3 hours of testing. Testing included self-reported measures exclusively. These included: the Awareness Questionnaire (AQ); the Chicago Multiscale Depression Inventory; Health Status Questionnaire (SF-12); Satisfaction with Life Scale; and the Memory and Cognitive Function Questionnaire. Only 60% of the care givers completed the AQ. The final results of the study were reported only for those subjects for whom the AQ were complete.

What did the study find?

The investigators reported their results when both depressive symptoms and self-awareness are analyzed together. In this analysis, they report that symptoms of depression were significantly associated with self-reports of poor memory, lower health related QoL and lower satisfaction with life. When an individual had a higher level of self-awareness they had lower ratings of health related QoL and reduced memory abilities. However, subjects reported having a better strategy regarding memory. If the investigators assessed the contribution of depressive symptoms or self-awareness separately, depressive symptomatology, and not self-awareness, was significantly associated with health related QoL, satisfaction and memory. The study findings emphasize the importance of behavioral and emotional factors in recovery and treatment plans when using self-reports to evaluate people with TBI.

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¹ Goverover, Y., & Chiaravalloti, N. (2014). The impact of self-awareness and depression on subjective reports of memory, quality-of-life and satisfaction following TBI. *Journal of Brain Injury*, 28(2), 174–180.