Craniotomy Support Group Newsletter

04/09/15

An estimated 1.7 million people sustain some sort of head injury annually and of those, 52,000 die, 275,000 are hospitalized, and 1.365 million are treated and released. Many patients who sustain brain injuries often ask, "How long will recovery take"? The answer to this question is not easy. Every brain injury is different and every person is different and although a lot has been studied on the brain there are still a lot of unknowns.

So how long does recovery take? The most significant recovery takes place in the first 6 months. Brain scans are done every 2-6 months to check on the progress of brain healing but they may not always be the best at determining the extent of the injury. The type of brain injury and secondary issues such as swelling can be one of the factors in determining long term effects. Literature suggests that the first six months after the injury is where rapid improvement takes place. 2 years after the injury progress is still made however it is not as obvious. Recovery will continue to take place over 10 years. Researchers do know that the more severe the injury the less likely the patient will recover. The length of time in a coma is also an important factor in recovery and the duration of loss of memory.

Rehab: Research has found that patients who received inpatient rehabilitation after brain injury had better outcomes than patients who received only acute care. Outcomes were measured in the areas of functional status, daily care requirements, ability to return home and vocational status.

Elements of TBI Rehabilitation

According to Cope (1995), comprehensive TBI rehabilitation today consists of at least the following elements:

- The rehabilitation physician (also known as a physiatrist) and rehabilitation nurse have special training in diagnosing and treating people with disabilities. Their goal is to help the patient function as independently as possible.
- The prevention of secondary deterioration is important. Evidence clearly confirms that specific interventions can prevent deterioration and complications. These interventions may not reliably occur in non-rehabilitation environments.
- Rehabilitation builds upon natural recovery processes. Rehabilitation interventions are incremental and work toward functional gains. The challenges of mobility, self-care and communication can be overwhelming for the patient. This may result in a hopeless "giving-up" response by the patient. Over time and with comprehensive rehabilitation, progress can occur.
- An optimal environment for neurological recovery is provided by rehabilitation settings.
- Various compensatory techniques are provided and taught to promote recovery and help with the tasks of daily living.
- Adaptive and specialized equipment, such as wheelchairs or orthoses, is available in this setting.
- Environmental modifications are available. These include architectural and transportation interventions. Even more important may be interventions in the patient's social milieu, which include modifications at home, at work and in the community.

Next Meeting:	**Topic:**
May 14th 5:30 PM at SNSI Lobby	**To Be Determined**