

PROJECT NEWS

Staff & Other Changes

RRC STAFF CHANGES

Wow! While you've been away we have had our fair share of staff changes (mostly additions). Welcome to new (or new to you) staff members: **Ketra Toda**, Clinical Research Assistant II, working on the Brain Injury National Database study and the longitudinal fatigue study; **Bindu Naran**, Clinical Research Assistant II, working on the cross sectional fatigue study and a study on aging after spinal cord injury (SCI); **Kim Emley**, Clinical Research Assistant II, working on the cognitive orthotic study, an exercise study, and a study examining menopause after SCI; **Lois Roberts**, Office Specialist II, working as our office manager; **Travis Casper**, Clinical Research Assistant II, working as program assistant for the new "Back on Track" Mentoring Program, and **Beth Wilson**, Clinical Support Program Coordinator, coordinating the new "Back on Track" Mentoring Program. Welcome all!

Naomi McCarroll, our old office manager, has retired to spend more time with grandkids and great-grandkids! We still miss you Naomi!

NEW LOCATION AND CONTACTS

The RRC offices have moved to a new location on the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center campus. We are located in Unit 100 of the Barbara Arons Pavilion.

Our new mailing address:

The Rehabilitation Research Center
Santa Clara Valley Medical Center
751 South Bascom Avenue
San Jose, CA 95128

Our new main phone number:

(408) 793-6433
(800) 352-1956 (same toll-free number)

Many of the staff have new email address as well, although email sent to older addresses will be forwarded to them.

inter@ct

RRC News
Research Activities
Community Programs

Rehabilitation Research Center for TBI and SCI

New Grants for the RRC

New Mentoring Program & New Study on Memory Device

The Rehabilitation Research Center (RRC) at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center has been awarded two exciting new projects. The Rehabilitation Services Administration has awarded the RRC a five-year grant entitled "Back on Track: A Community-Based Mentoring Program". The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) has awarded the RRC a three-year grant on "The Efficacy of a Customized Cognitive Orthotic with Automated Planning and Cueing Assistance". More information on these projects follows.

Back on Track, Mentoring for Vocational and Educational Outcomes

The "Back on Track" Community-Based Mentoring Program, is a one-on-one mentoring program for teens and young adults, ages 16 to 26, who have recently undergone rehabilitation for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) or other disability and are ready to return to active living by going to college or getting a job. Our focus is to connect these individuals with the appropriate community resources and support they need to be successful. This program is a needed service for Bay Area youth and young adults with disabilities.

We are currently searching for volunteer mentors who have life experience working or going to college successfully and are interested in working with people who have recently acquired a brain injury, spinal cord injury or other disability. The ideal mentor is someone who has personal experience with TBI, SCI, or other disability, and/or students who are interested in rehabilitation, physical medicine, Social Work, OT, Speech Therapy, CTRS, etc.

Mentoring can be a rewarding and meaningful experience. Mentors will have the opportunity to share what they know to help someone else by creating opportunities for sharing experiences, building community contacts and helping to develop coping skills for navigating the of the systems of care, educational and employment institutions.

Mentors will receive a stipend of \$100 per month. In addition to being an incentive, the stipend can be used to compensate for the mentors' time and costs relating to community outings, travel, phone calls to mentee, etc. This is a great volunteer experience for resume building. Mentors should expect to make contact with their mentee by phone, email or in person about once a week. In addition to the program coordinator, there will be a vocational rehabilitation counselor and rehabilitation psychologist available to support the mentoring relationships.

We are currently inviting people 16-26 years of age, who have an acquired injury or disability to be matched with a mentor. Participants should be very interested in getting a job or going to college. Mentors will be trained to help you by sharing, listening, providing information on local resources and support. The program is free including program related assistance from the program Vocational Counselor and Rehabilitation Psychologist.

For more information please contact the program coordinator, Beth Wilson (408) 885-2397 or beth.wilson@hhs.co.santa-clara.ca.us

Cognitive Orthotic Study

Cognitive orthotics are devices that help you if you are having problems in a cognitive area (memory problems, inability to schedule and carry out daily activities, being unable to adapt if you encounter problems). Advances in computer technology have made these

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NEW GRANTS (CONT.)

sorts of devices potentially more useful. The PEAT device (Planning and Execution Assistant and Trainer) is a cognitive orthotic.

This study will look at the effectiveness of the PEAT device. It is hoped that individuals using the PEAT device will be able to perform more activities of daily living (ADL's) and require less daily support from caregivers.

Assistive technology is only recently being applied towards individuals with cognitive problems. If useful, the PEAT device has the potential of increasing individuals' quality of life. If the PEAT device is shown to be useful, it could be made more widely available to other people with cognitive problems.

Subjects that agree to participate in this study will be randomly assigned to either a group that will use the PEAT device or to a group that will use standard cognitive/memory approaches (cueing systems, calendars, organizers, or other electronic devices).

Subjects will be interviewed to assess their cognitive issues and level of disability. Participants will then receive up to 15 hours of training in using either the PEAT device or other memory/cognitive aides. This training will take place mainly at the beginning of the study with "tune-up" training available towards the end of the study..

After three months participants will be interviewed to assess their cognitive issues and level of disability. This will take about one hour. After six months participants will be interviewed to assess their cognitive issues and level of disability. They will also be asked to complete a satisfaction survey.

All participants will receive up to 11 hours of therapy time focused on dealing with cognitive issues. There will be no charge for this therapy time. Participants using the PEAT device may find that they can more easily remember and accomplish their daily activities.

For more information on this study, please contact: Kim Emley, Clinical Research Assistant II at (408) 885-2383 or kimberly.emley@hhs.co.scl.ca.us

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Brain Injury Research Assistant

Ketra Toda



Ketra Toda

Medical research often involves painstaking review of medical information, the investigative skills of a master detective, and the ability to talk and really listen to individuals with disabilities. If you want to know more, ask one of the best, Ketra Toda, who has been a Clinical Research Assistant with the Rehabilitation Research Center (RRC) for the past two years.

Ketra is currently involved with two large projects. The first is a national database that collects information on individuals that have had traumatic brain injuries. Ketra explains the project to patients and families and details our informed consent procedures.

Ketra then collects medical information that describes the circumstances and severity of injuries. Additional information is collected that documents what happened during the hospital stay and describes the functional level of the individual. Information collected for this database is used by researchers to answer questions about what happens after brain injury. Although the information goes to a national database, the participants remain anonymous. Ketra was recently involved in helping to develop training materials for data collectors working at all 16 facilities collecting information for the national database.

Ketra is also working on a study that looks at the development of fatigue after brain injury. Fatigue is one of the most common complaints after brain injury, but little is known in regards to its cause or its development. This study looks at the development of fatigue over the first two years after brain injury and some of its possible causes (sleep problems, depression, alcohol use, social situation, hormonal imbalances). Participants are contacted 6 times over 2 years and also agree to have their blood tested once for possible hormone issues. Ketra conducts the interviews and coordinates participants coming in for blood tests.

"One of the best things about my job," related Ketra, "is that I get to develop relationships with patients and families. I get to know them and their stories. I also get to celebrate their recovery over time."

Ketra's interests include spending time with her family, enjoying and creating art, gardening, listening to music, and watching choice movies ("Out of Africa" is her favorite). Someday she would like to recreate the "Out of Africa" experience and visit Africa on an old-world safari.

Thanks Ketra, for all you do to help collect the important information that allows us to know more about what happens after brain injury.

inter@ct is brought to you by NIDRR grants H133A020524 and H133N000007. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal government. Address inquiries to Jerry Wright, Editor, Design & Production. Phone (408) 793-6430. Email: jerry.wright@hhs.co.scl.ca.us

SUPPORT CORNER

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI) SUPPORT GROUPS

- **Mild Brain Injury (MBI) Group**
For individuals in the community with brain injury, and friends and family. Meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Cypress Senior Center, 403 So. Cypress Ave., San Jose. Contact **Richard Patterson** at (408) 793-6428.
- **Very Important Patient (VIP) Group**
Includes inpatients, outpatients, individuals in the community with brain injury, and friends and family. Meets the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, 2nd Center Day Room (2nd Floor). Contact **Richard Patterson** at (408) 793-6428.

SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI) SUPPORT GROUPS

- **SCI Support Group**
Includes individuals in the community with SCI, and friends and family. Meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Cypress Senior Center, 403 So. Cypress Ave., San Jose. Contact **Richard Patterson**, (408) 793-6428.
- **SCI Women's Peer Support Group**
Includes women in the community with SCI. Meets on the fourth Friday of the month from 12:00 p.m. to 2 p.m. Contact **Janie Whiteford**, (408) 356-6034, for the location.
- **Family & Caregiver Support Group**
Includes family, caregivers and friends. Meets every other Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, Rehabilitation Conference Room. Contact **Dan Mayclin** at (408) 860-7883 (pager).

RESOURCE INFORMATION

Vocational Websites

Unfortunately, employment following a brain or spinal cord injury is not often easy. The following electronic resources have information on finding a job, training for a job, and getting a job. Special thanks to **Travis Casper** of the *Back on Track Mentoring Program* for identifying these resources.

America's Job Bank

<www.ajb.dni.us>

Websites offer links to information on various employment related topics including posting a resume, creating a cover letter, creating job search scouts and searching for jobs, job training, school to work, work incentives, and workplace accommodations.

BayJobs.com

<www.BayJobs.com>

Website offers links to search for jobs all around the San Francisco Bay Area as well as links to job search resources featuring links to various company websites, employment/temporary agencies, San Francisco jobs, Human Resources jobs and even internet jobs.

Connect! Job Seeker Center

<www.connect.one-stop.org>

Provides solutions for employment and education needs through job search workshops, career advising, access to job listings from CalJOBS database, resume review, and other employment services for persons with disabilities.

Janet Pomeroy Center

<www.janetpomeroy.org>

Nonprofit organization serving people with acquired brain injuries through programs called SF TBI Net and TBI Case Services that provide people with acquired brain injury an opportunity to prepare for employment through a structured, time-limited service. Also provides supported employment, job coaching, and job placement services and information about and referral to various community agencies that serve brain injured individuals in a variety of areas.

The Job Network

<www.thejobnetwork.net>

Website offers links to Bay Area jobs, resume assistance, labor market information, career planning, job search assistance, and training and education.

The Monster Board

<www.monster.com>

Website offers links to find jobs, set up job alerts, post resumes, network with people already employed, and get career advice and resume assistance

Project Hired

<www.projecthired.org>

Project Hired (Helping Industry Recruit Employees with Disabilities) assists individuals with disabilities to secure jobs appropriate to their qualifications and career goals. They also maintain a range of services for job placement and career development. There is no cost to clients for services.

Services For Brain Injury (SBI)

<<http://www.sbicares.org>>

Aims to help people who have sustained a traumatic brain injury by offering speech therapy, occupational therapy and counseling for clients and their families as well as independent living skills training in cooking, home and money management, crafts, and volunteerism. Also assists people who have sustained a traumatic brain injury by offering vocational testing and evaluations, job training and placement, and on-the-job coaching as well as advocacy for housing, acquisition of entitlements, and transportation.

TransAccess

<www.transaccess.org>

Offers training in various kinds of adaptive technology as well as career transition services such as workshops, internships, job placement, and links to other events and useful resources.

Study Announcement

Fatigue After Traumatic Brain Injury: What are the Underlying Factors?

What is fatigue: Fatigue is physical or mental exhaustion or weariness. Fatigue can impact daily functioning at home or at work, limiting your activities or making you feel like you are very tired. Fatigue is one of the most common complaints following a traumatic brain injury (TBI). It is estimated that between 50-80% of individuals with TBI have problems with fatigue.

Purpose of this study: Little is known about the causes of post-TBI fatigue. This study hopes to discover more about fatigue by collecting information from participants who have had a TBI. Particularly, we are interested in how depression, sleep disturbance, drug and alcohol use, and endocrine abnormalities may play a role in the development of fatigue. We hope to be able to identify different types and levels of fatigue and identify their underlying factors.

What happens during this study: Your involvement with this study would involve completion of a one-time interview and blood testing.

Who is eligible to participate: You can enroll if you have had a TBI, your injury was at least one year ago, and you are at least 16 years old. If you have any of the following conditions - heart disease, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, post-polio syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, cancer, or are pregnant - you cannot participate. Subjects need to understand one of the following languages: English, Spanish or Vietnamese.

Who do I contact if I'm interested in participating or want more information: Bindu Naran
(800) 352-1956 or (408) 793-6437
Email: bindu.naran@hhs.co.santa-clara.ca.us

Another Study Announcement

Exercise and Spinal Cord Injury

Introduction:

Several studies have proven that individuals with spinal cord injuries (SCI) can show improvements in fitness. Improved fitness is associated with better overall health and function. Warm water exercise has also been shown to decrease spasticity and pain, two common conditions following SCI. We are seeking individuals with SCI who would like to experience the benefits of a warm water exercise program. If you choose to participate in this study, the Rehabilitation Research Center will pay for your exercise program.

Who is eligible to participate:

Persons with SCI who have been injured for at least 2 years and who do not currently participate in a regular exercise program.

Who do I contact if I'm interested in participating or want more information:

Kim Emley
(800) 352-1956 or (408) 885-2383
Email: kimberly.emley@hhs.co.santa-clara.ca.us



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