Exploring the role of personality traits in symptom-burden, return to work and health related quality of life one year after mild-to-moderate traumatic brain injury

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PhD project overview

Background: The majority of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are classified as mild. Approximately one third of patients with mild TBI (mTBI) experience symptoms that persist beyond 3 months post-injury. While premorbid factors, including specific personality traits, have been implicated in the persistence of symptoms after mTBI, studies that assess the influence of personality on recovery after mTBI are scarce.

Objectives: This project aims to assess the relationship between personality traits and a) persistent post-concussion symptoms (PPCS), b) return to work (RTW) and c) health related quality of life (HRQoL), in patients with mild-to-moderate TBI one year post-injury.

Design & methods: This project draws on the randomised controlled trial (RCT) "The effect evaluation of combined cognitive and vocational interventions after mild-to-moderate traumatic brain injury". The RCT was carried out at a specialised TBI outpatient clinic at Oslo University Hospital, Norway, and CHARM between 2017 and 2021. Eighty-seven participants who sustained a mild or moderate TBI 8-12 weeks previously are included in this PhD project. Personality traits were measured with The NEO Five Factor Inventory,-an abbreviated version of original Five factor model of personality. Self-reported symptoms, work status and HRQoL was assessed at baseline (2-3 months post injury), and at 12 months after study inclusion. The participants will be analysed as one cohort in this study, as the RCT found no between-group differences in work participation at 12 months follow-up.

Conclusions: This PhD project will contribute knowledge on how personality traits influence recovery and outcomes in patients with mTBI. This may improve clinician's ability to identify patients at risk of long-term symptoms and response to treatment in clinical practice.