

A Community-Based Approach to Ensure High-Quality Healthcare for Service Members and Veterans with TBI-Related Cognitive Morbidity: An I-HEAL Focused Program Award Project



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Introduction

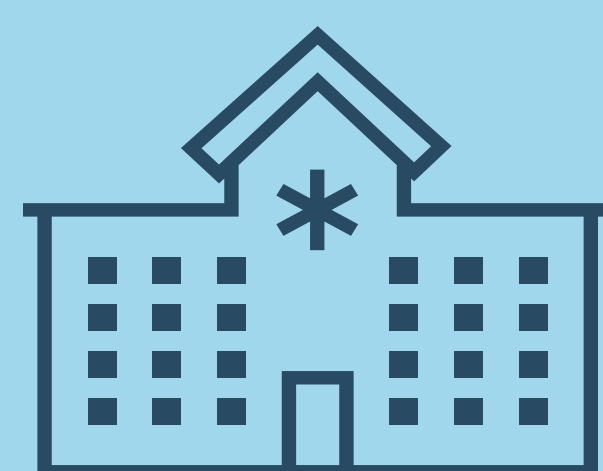
- Military traumatic brain injury (TBI) is associated with higher rates of rehospitalization and early mortality.¹⁻²
- Impaired cognition (e.g., memory, attention, executive functioning) following TBI is the leading barrier to accessing high-quality healthcare.³
- Cognitive issues result in poor follow-up, hindered coordination of services, noncompliance, and loss to follow-up resulting in low-quality care.³
- Innovations to improve access to high-quality healthcare for TBI-related cognitive issues are being developed as part of a CDMRP Focused Program Award (I-HEAL), which includes identifying best practices for enhancing healthcare via a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach.⁴

Methods

- Participants included 55 I-HEAL community partners representing:
 - TBI lived experience
 - Professionals
 - Researchers
- At the I-HEAL Kick Off Meeting, participants responded to prompts using graffiti wall technique, including: "What are the best practices for helping patients follow instructions and attend appointments?"
- Rapid matrix analysis (pile-sort) of responses into emergent categories were consistent with implementation science frameworks that inform selection of implementation strategies.

Implementation Strategies to Ensure High Quality Healthcare Encounters in Working with Persons with TBI and Cognitive Difficulties

Healthcare System Strategies



- Use standardized templates in EMR for patient/family readability
- Create templates that highlight key take-home messages
- Implement care partner training and education
- Create appointment structures with extra time for persons with TBI and disability



Provider Strategies

- Communicate in simple language
- Give permission to record sessions
- Ask patient preference for communication of health information
- Provide modality options for communication of health information
- Include care partner or family in appointments
- Give care partner proxy access to MyChart (EMR)

Patient and Family Strategies



- Develop a summary of key medical information
- Prepare questions for the provider in advance
- Develop strategies for follow-through on provided recommendations
- Use organizational tools (e.g., calendars, dry erase boards, checklists)
- Individualize and coordinate appointments amongst providers to decrease burden
- Engage in peer support

Results

Six themes relating to strategies were identified for improving the quality of healthcare encounters and align with . They were spread amongst the following three categories:

Health Care System

- Supportive appointment structure and coordination across providers, clinics, and systems.
- Inclusion and engagement of support system (e.g., caregiver, peer support, case manager) before, during, and after appointments.

Provider

- Provider-initiated behavioral strategies to maximize compliance and engagement.
- Communication strategies that are clear and supported by patient-preferred modalities (e.g., paper, email, messaging).

Patient and Family

- Preparation for appointments.
- Accessible, supportive technology, whether electronic or analog, for reminders and organization of information.

References

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Discussion

- Using a CBPR approach, best practices across a variety of partners were identified to ensure high-quality healthcare encounters.
- The method of engagement was novel for gathering insight into best practices for improving healthcare quality.
- Integrating best practices into settings that provide services to military TBI has the potential to improve health, readiness, and long-term outcomes.