

## **Injury and Psychological Predictors of Employment Stability in Veterans and Service Members with TBI: A VA Brain Injury Model Systems Study.**

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**Objective:** To examine incidence and predictors of employment stability following return to work in Veteran and Military Service Members (V/SM) with traumatic brain injury (TBI).

**Design:** Prospective observational cohort study.

**Setting:** Four Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers (PRCs).

### **Participants**

Sample was derived from 627 participants enrolled in the VA TBI Model System study during inpatient rehabilitation; 407 met inclusion criteria. Study sample consisted of 111 V/SM who were primarily male (93.7%) with a median age of 26, and included primarily moderate to severe injuries (47.8%) from motor-related (46.9%) and blast injuries (27.9%).

**Interventions:** Not applicable.

**Main Outcome Measure(s)** Employment Stability.

**Results:** One-hundred and eleven participants (27.3% of eligible) reported returning to competitive employment within 2-years post-injury. Of those returning to competitive employment, forty-eight percent ( $n=53$ ) remained employed at subsequent VA TBIMS follow-up. Univariate binary logistic regression revealed stable employment was associated with higher initial GCS (injury severity) and lower PTSD symptoms (PCL). Non-significant associations were reported for age, years of education, FIM, marital status, urbanicity, and premorbid census occupational category.

### **Conclusions**

A large proportion of members of the Armed Forces serving in Operation Iraqi and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) sustain TBIs and report symptoms and problems within the first five years following injury. To date, no study has examined employment stability in a Veteran or Military Sample with history of TBI. Study findings may identify individuals at risk for poor employment stability who may require greater services to enhance functioning and participation following injury.

### **Learning Objectives:**

Describe factors associated with job stability in a sample of Veterans and Service Members with TBI.

Describe how job stability varies by injury severity.

Describe how job stability is affected by mental health and functional status variables.

### **Author Disclosure(s)**

- Adam Haskin is an employee of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (Tampa, Florida).
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Financial Disclosures – none.
- This research was sponsored by VHA Central Office Division of Rehabilitation Medicine and VA TBI Model System Program of Research, HSR&D Center for Innovation in Rehabilitation Outcome (Tampa & Gainesville, Florida).
- This material is based upon work supported in part by the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, US Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC).
- This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital.
- The views, opinions, and/or findings contained in this article are those of the authors and should not be construed as an official Department of Defense position or any other federal agency, policy or decision unless so designated by other official documentation.