



Patient-oriented Research Project Description

Project Title: Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on individuals with SCI and rehabilitation services in urban and rural settings

Project PI: Dr. Andrei Krassioukov

Start and End Dates: May 1, 2021 to August 31, 2021

Position Type: Paid (\$18/hr) Volunteer

Hours per Week: 15-20 hours

Number of Openings: 1

Clinical Research Area: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation and Psychiatry

Location: iCORD Blusson Spinal Cord Centre and Virtually

Experience Level: BSc MSc MD PhD MD-PhD PDF

Keywords: Spinal cord injury, Impact of COVID-19 pandemic

Project Description:

The purpose of this project is to develop an understanding of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals with SCI in British Columbia (BC), as well as on the provision of rehabilitation services and supportive care.

Objective 1: To examine the perceived impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals with SCI in urban and rural areas of BC. This will include impact on mental health (Aim 1) and a description of access to healthcare services (Aim 2).

Objective 2: To examine the perceived impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on clinical personnel in urban and rural areas of BC. This will include the impact on mental health (Aim 3) and service provision (Aim 4).

Objective 3: To develop recommendations to support individuals with SCI and other physical disabilities during the pandemic period (Aim 5).

Activities: We will recruit; i) individuals with SCI (males and females ≥ 18 years old) and, ii) medical practitioners involved in care of individuals with SCI (psychologists, physical- and occupational therapists). The project is a mixed-methods study using a combination of validated online questionnaires (Aims 1 & 3) and semi-structured video interviews (Aims 2 & 4). We will host a virtual town hall with key stakeholders to rapidly disseminate the information and develop a position statement regarding SCI rehabilitative care during the pandemic, to achieve Aim 5. All participants will complete online questionnaires, which will allow us to understand the impact of COVID-19 on individuals with SCI and rehabilitation service providers compared to the general population. A subsample of participants will be recruited for follow up semi-structured interviews designed to explore their experiences of trying to access or deliver medical/rehabilitation services during the pandemic, their perceptions of how their (in)ability to access or deliver services has impacted their mental health, and their ideas for adapting practices to better support the needs of the SCI community during times of physical distancing. The semi structured interviews will directly

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engage study participants/patients, and the experiences, knowledge and practices of participants will help to identify areas for future research. The virtual town hall forum will allow us to obtain input from a broad range of health care providers to finalize clinical practice recommendations on maintaining rehabilitation services and support of mental health.

Candidate's Role & Specific Tasks:

Analysis of online survey data (e.g., Demographic questions; validated Patient Health Questionnaire-9 and Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7, validated Fear of COVID-19 Scale, Impact of Event Scale-Revised, and Perceived Vulnerability to Disease Scale). Transcription and qualitative descriptive analysis of semi-structured video interviews designed to explore participants' experiences of trying to access or deliver medical/rehabilitation services during the pandemic, their perceptions of how their (in)ability to access or deliver services has impacted their mental health, and their ideas for adapting practices to better support the needs of the SCI community during times of physical distancing. Contribution to planning and execution of virtual town hall and formation of clinical practice recommendations.

The student will gain practical experience learning about patient and rehabilitation service provider experiences and perspectives of accessing or delivering rehabilitation services during the pandemic. Through the tasks described above they will learn how to analyze, summarize and incorporate patient and service provider feedback into concrete clinical practice recommendations to improve rehabilitation services and mental health support.

Mentorship Opportunities:

- Mentorship will be provided by the project researcher, principal investigator and project coordinator – all of whom come from an array of different backgrounds and disciplines.
- Successful candidate will work in a team environment consisting of post-doctoral fellows and graduate students with a range of clinical and research experience. Students will have sources of knowledge available to them that classroom learning cannot provide.
- Having so many resources within the Blusson Centre provides a unique opportunity to have clinicians and basic science researchers on hand to lend advice to students.
- The student will be given a full orientation of the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre (BSCC) including safety and working guidelines.
- Students will also undergo a lab-specific orientation including use of equipment, specific hazards and safety, proper personal protective equipment, as well as workplace etiquette.
- The candidate will learn other practical skills such as data analysis and document creation.
- Student will not only have the opportunity to attend lab meetings at which they will be able to see how work is presented, but will also create and present their own work at meetings and poster sessions.

Application Instructions:

Required Documents: Cover Letter Resume Transcript Class Schedule Other:

If you are interested in this opportunity and would like to apply, please send the above listed documents to Dr. Andrei Krassioukov at andrei.krassioukov@vch.ca