

# Scientists study impact of cultural diversity in brain injury research

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Kessler Foundation scientists examined the implications for cultural diversity and cultural competence in brain injury research and rehabilitation. The article by Anthony Lequerica, PhD, and Denise Krch, PhD: Issues of cultural diversity in acquired brain injury (ABI) rehabilitation (doi:10.3233/NRE-141079) was published by *Neurorehabilitation*. Drs. Lequerica and Krch are research scientists in Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Research at Kessler Foundation and co-investigators for the Northern New Jersey TBI Model System.

Cultural sensitivity is an important consideration for professionals in [brain injury](#) research and rehabilitation. With the growth in minority populations, more minorities are being included in the patient population with acquired brain injury. Moreover, their risk for brain injury is higher, as is the likelihood for poorer outcomes. Studies show that among minorities who receive rehabilitation after brain injury, health disparities persist and affect long-term outcomes. Growth in research in disability and rehabilitation is improving our understanding of the impact of culture on rehabilitation outcomes.

"While translating research to evidence-based treatments is an important pathway, clinical practice can also identify issues that need to be addressed through research," said Dr. Lequerica. "As our culture diversifies, providing effective care depends on acquiring the skills to deal with cultural factors that relate to ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation and religion. Raising cultural awareness among researchers and clinicians is essential to developing patient-centered

interventions that reduce [health disparities](#) and improve outcomes for all patients with brain injury. We also need more studies that examine the interactions of complex cultural factors with individuals, providers and the environment."

**More information:** Lequerica A, et al. The Community Integration Questionnaire: factor structure across racial/ethnic groups in persons with traumatic brain injury. *J Head Trauma Rehabil.* 2013;28(6):E14-22.

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