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Research paper

Supporting people with traumatic brain injury in their use of public spaces: Identifying facilitating factors and obstacles[☆]



Fréquentation des lieux publics par les personnes ayant un traumatisme crânien : facilitateurs et obstacles

Hélène Lefebvre^{*}, Marie-Josée Levert

Faculty of Nursing, Université de Montréal, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Rehabilitation of Greater Montreal (CRIR), Groupe inter-réseaux de recherche sur l'adaptation de la famille et de son environnement (GIRAFE), CP 6128, Succursale Centre-Ville, Montréal, QC, H3C 3J7 Canada

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ABSTRACT

Aim. – During the course of the Citizen Accompaniment for Community Integration (APIC) project, people with a traumatic brain injury (TBI) visited several different public places. This study aims to identify and record the facilitating factors and obstacles encountered when engaging in activities in public places.

Methodology. – The research design is qualitative. The study is a retrospective analysis of part of the data from the original research, drawn from semi-structured interviews recorded and transcribed verbatim, and from weekly entries in journals kept by the citizen-accompaniers. The sample is made up of 13 individuals with mild, moderate or severe TBI, between the ages of 29 and 69, and nine accompaniers.

[☆] The study presented in this article—like the others in this special issue *Le centre commercial : un laboratoire vivant*/Mall as Living Lab—is part of the larger “CRIR-Living Lab Vivant” project described in the introduction to the issue: Desjardins M., Ville I., Mazurik K. (2014) On theoretical and methodological constructs of obstacles to social participation: The CRIR-Living Lab Vivant project. *Alter, European Journal of Disability Research*, 8 (3).

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: helene.lefebvre@umontreal.ca (H. Lefebvre), mj.levert@umontreal.ca (M.-J. Levert).

Results. – Participants' comments regarding their use of public places, as well as the accompagniers' thoughts on which factors promote or impede participation in activities in public places were collected according to the sequence of actions framework: the planning, the trip, and the use of the public place.

Discussion and conclusion. – The results show that the design of public spaces must take into account the needs for comfort and safety of people with a disability and promote their autonomy and efficiency within the space.

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R É S U M É

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Objectif. – Dans le cadre d'un projet évaluatif d'accompagnement citoyen à l'intégration dans la communauté (APIC), des personnes ayant subi un traumatisme crânien cérébral (TCC) ont fréquenté différents lieux publics. La présente étude vise à rendre compte des facteurs facilitants et contraignants associés à ce type d'activités.

Méthode. – De type qualitatif, elle consiste en des analyses secondaires du matériel puisé de la recherche originale APIC, à partir d'entrevues semi-structurées auprès de participants et de journaux de bord tenus par les accompagnateurs. L'échantillon est formé de 13 personnes atteintes d'un TCC léger, modéré ou sévère, âgées entre 29 et 69 ans et de neuf accompagnateurs.

Résultats. – Des facteurs contraignants et facilitants ont été identifiés. Ils font référence à la séquence suivante : la planification de l'activité, le parcours entre le domicile et le lieu où se déroule l'activité et l'utilisation des lieux publics.

Discussion et conclusion. – Les résultats indiquent que l'environnement des lieux publics fréquentés par les personnes avec TCC doit être aménagé de façon à répondre à leurs besoins de sécurité et de confort, et à promouvoir leur autonomie et l'efficacité dans la fréquentation de l'espace public.

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1. Introduction

Participation in social and leisure activities fulfills an essential need for both people with TBI and those without. However, it tends to be considerably lower in people with TBI because they must generally contend with numerous sequelae (Brown, Wayne, & Spielman, 2003), such as social and emotional difficulties, as well as behavioral changes (Pépin, Dumont, & Hopps, 2000; Ponsford, Harrington, Olver & Roper, 2006; Winkler, Unsworth, & Sloan, 2006). These sequelae limit social networks, restrict the activities people with TBI engage in, and lead to isolation. In addition, the physical and social environments of people with TBI impact their social participation (Lefebvre, Cloutier, & Levert, 2008; Powell, Heslin, & Greenwood, 2002).

A growing body of literature is currently documenting initiatives to facilitate the community integration of people with TBI. Some have hypothesized that for such integration to succeed, it must combine three components: independence in everyday life (e.g., to take care of personal needs, to carry out general activities of daily living), access to social support (e.g., close relationships, acceptance, a network of relationships), and proper time management (e.g., engagement in work and leisure activities) (McCabe, Lippert, Weiser, Hilditch, Hartridge, & Villamere, 2007; McColl, 2007). As noted above, several initiatives have been implemented to encourage satisfactory community integration,

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