



Brain-e-News

SPRING 2019

RESOURCES

MOSS REHABILITATION
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
www.mrrl.org

MOSSREHAB RESOURCE NET
www.mossresourcenet.org

THE CENTER FOR OUTCOME
MEASUREMENT IN BRAIN
INJURY
www.tblms.org/combl

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA
WWW.BIAUSA.ORG

BRAIN INJURY RESOURCE LINE
1-800-444-6443

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF
PENNSYLVANIA
www.blapa.org
1-866-635-7097

BRAIN INJURY ALLIANCE OF
NEW JERSEY
www.blanj.org
1-732-745-0200
FAMILY HELPLINE
1-800-669-4323

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF
DELAWARE
www.blausa.org/Delaware/bla.htm
1-800-411-0505

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH BRAIN INJURY
HELPLINE
1-866-412-4755
TTY 1-877-232-7640

MODEL SYSTEM KNOWLEDGE
TRANSLATION CENTER (MSKTC)
www.msktc.org

www.Brainlline.org

Dr. Tessa Hart Retires and is Honored with Prestigious Award

Dr. Tessa Hart retired from her position as the Director of the Moss Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Model System at the end of 2018. Dr. Hart has dedicated her entire career to improving the lives of persons with TBI and their caregivers. Before joining Moss Rehabilitation Research Institute (MRR) as a full-time researcher in 1999, she worked for over 15 years in clinical practice, treating and developing programs for people with acquired brain injury and their families in inpatient, outpatient, and residential settings.



Starting in 2002, she served as the Principal Investigator of the Moss TBI Model Systems, funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. Under Dr. Hart's leadership, the Moss TBI Model System has been one of the longest continually-funded Model Systems in the country. Her research has also been funded by the National Institutes of Health, The Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Albert Einstein Society.

Continued on page 2

Traumatic Brain Injury and Pain

TBI is often accompanied by other body injuries, and surgical procedures that result in pain. Although individuals must be conscious in order to experience distress from painful injuries, even unconscious patients need to be treated for these injuries, whether they are in distress or not. The best way to assess pain is to ask patients to rate their pain severity on a numbered scale, but many patients with TBI aren't able to do this early after injury when they are most likely to have painful injuries. Instead, clinicians try to decide by looking for behavioral signs of pain.

Continued on page 2

Dr. Tessa Hart Retires (continued)

In May of 2019, Dr. Hart's contributions to the field of brain injury rehabilitation were honored with the Robert L. Moody Prize for Distinguished Initiatives in Brain Injury Research and Rehabilitation. The Moody Prize is presented by the University of Texas Medical Branch School of Health Professions at Galveston to honor and recognize individuals who have made significant contributions in applied brain injury research and rehabilitation.

Over the course of her distinguished career, Dr. Hart has left a lasting impact on the field of TBI Rehabilitation, through her scholarship, mentorship, and service. She is a Fellow of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology, and has served on the ACRM Board of Governors. She is also a past-president of APA's Division of Rehabilitation Psychology. She has served on the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board of PA.

Dr. Hart's research has made major contributions to clinical care of persons with brain injury, particularly in the areas of executive dysfunction, emotional disorders, vocational issues, and the use of assistive technology. She has also published on rehabilitation clinical research methods, and has been involved for more than a decade in the attempt to parse the active ingredients of rehabilitation. She has published and lectured extensively on the long-term sequelae of TBI and approaches to treatment. In addition to more than 100 peer-reviewed publications, Dr. Hart has written numerous book chapters and materials for people with brain injury and their families.

We congratulate Dr. Hart for this milestone in her career! Her daily presence at MRRI will be deeply missed, but she continues to leave her mark on the field of Brain Injury Rehabilitation as Scientist Emerita.



Pain and TBI (continued)

This is a problem too, since some of the behaviors seen in post-traumatic agitation may be misinterpreted as signs of pain. If clinicians can't accurately measure pain, they might fail to diagnose the underlying injury or fail to recognize distress, or over-treat it with sedating medication, leaving the patient too sleepy to participate in rehabilitation.

Researchers at MossRehab and at the University Hospital of Copenhagen aimed to develop a tool to accurately measure the presence and severity of painful conditions whether the patient regardless of the patient's level of consciousness or agitation. We studied 176 patients with TBI who could not perform traditional pain assessments. We identified 10 simple behaviors (e.g., facial expressions) and measurements (e.g., blood pressure) that change in response to injury, and measured these indicators in different body positions and both on and off acetaminophen ("Tylenol"). We found that we can get an accurate score in about 10 minutes, and that this score is lower on acetaminophen, and higher when the patient is in an uncomfortable position. We also showed that the score is related to things like the number of injuries, but is relatively unaffected by the level of consciousness or agitation. This initial round of research suggests that this scale can help clinicians accurately measure and treat pain and painful injuries after severe brain injury.

Living Well with Brain Injury

Mark your calendar for this year's Consumer Conference

The *Living Well with Brain Injury* conference is sponsored by the Moss Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Model System and has a stellar group of local partners. This 1-day conference is geared toward persons with brain injury and their family members, and offers networking opportunities as well as lectures, workshops, information tables, and hands-on opportunities for learning. All of the topics were selected by persons with brain injury and family members working side by side with brain injury professionals.

The event will be held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center on **Saturday October 19, 2019 from 9am –4:30** (registration opens at 8am). The cost is \$15 per person. The full program will be published in late summer, but information is always available at **mossrehabconference.com**.

Please plan on joining us—you'll be glad you did!



The Faces of the TBI Model System: Kelly Cantwell

The TBI Lab is excited to introduce Kelly Cantwell, who joined us in January of this year as a Research Assistant. Kelly graduated from the College of New Jersey and did her undergraduate research studying executive function and divided attention.

She loves travelling and has been to places such as Finland, France, Canada and Mexico. Kelly also enjoys playing tennis and painting in her spare time. When asked about what she likes most about her job so far, Kelly mentioned getting to know the patients and their families as well as working in support of a good cause.

Welcome, Kelly!



EMPOWERMENT and SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION

PENNSYLVANIA EMPOWERMENT GROUP

The Elkins Park Empowerment Group meets on the second Monday of each month from 5-6:30 at 60 Township Line Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027.

For more info, contact Debbi Eisen at 215-663-6857 or Jessica Dzurinko 215-663-6785.

NEW JERSEY SUPPORT GROUP

The New Jersey Support Group meets *most* months on the fourth Tuesday from 3:00-4:00 at 135 S. Broad Street, Woodbury NJ 08096.

For more info, contact Jazmine Tooles at 856-853-9900.

MossRehab at Elkins Park Hospital
50 E. Township Line Road
Elkins Park, PA 19027
ATTN: Lauren McLaughlin



The Moss TBI Model System

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research has designated MossRehab as a Model System for traumatic brain injury since 1997. The TBI Model System program seeks to improve lives by creating and disseminating new knowledge about the course, treatment and outcomes of TBI.

**The Traumatic
Brain Injury
Model System
(TBIMS)
Centers for
the current
funding cycle
(2017-2022)**

