



## Efficacy of leisure intervention groups in rehabilitation of people with an Acquired Brain Injury.



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As individuals become less vocationally active such as after a brain injury, engagement in leisure and social activity increases in importance to the persons well-being. However it is often the case that following a brain injury some people have difficulty accessing what is available in their local area for a variety of reasons. The adult team at the South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service (SWBIRS) in Albury, NSW recognized an ongoing need within the population they service for direct leisure intervention as part of the rehabilitation and adjustment to injury process. A program called *Pushing the Boundaries* was developed in an attempt to trial leisure intervention through groups rather than on an individual basis which was the current practice.

This study aimed to determine whether participation in a *Pushing the Boundaries* program targeting individuals with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) living in rural, regional and remote NSW, improved the leisure satisfaction, self esteem and quality of life of participants.

Using a pre and post intervention design, participants completed the Leisure Satisfaction Scale, Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale and the World Health Organisation Quality of Life Scale –Bref prior to each program, immediately following and at three months post program. Data were analysed using a Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Individual leisure goals generated by participants during the program were also investigated to gain further insight into the personal effects of this rehabilitation program.

Invitations for participation in both the program and the research were sent to 100 past and present clients of SWBIRS. Twelve adults (8 men and 4 women) participated, with a mean age of 36 years (range 19-49 years). The majority of participants (7/12) had acquired their injury more than two years previously and for most (10/12) the cause was trauma. Participants completing the week long program showed a significant improvement in leisure satisfaction ( $z = -3.06, p = 0.002$ ), self esteem ( $z = -2.22, p = 0.03$ ) and quality of life ( $z = -1.96, p = 0.05$ ) 3 months post program. Of the 27 individual goals specified during the week long program, 22 of these goals were reported to have been achieved three month post intervention, with 11 of the 12 participants reporting to have achieved at least one of their goals.

The findings indicate that adults with an acquired brain injury participating in a *Pushing the Boundaries* leisure program can experience improvements in leisure satisfaction, self esteem and quality of life following the program. These findings confirm a growing need for active leisure pursuits to be included in the ongoing rehabilitative care and integration of adults with an ABI.

*For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'*

Elizabeth currently works as a Physiotherapist and Rehabilitation Coordinator with the South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service. Prior to becoming a Physiotherapist she worked in a variety of occupations including agriculture and adult education. She is a participant in the Rural Research Capacity Building Program which has assisted to fund this project.



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