



INSWABI Progress Report

Vol. 2, Issue 2

July-December 2008

Dear INSWABI members

It gives us great pleasure to forward the 4th Progress report for the International Network for Social Workers in Acquired Brain Injury (INSWABI).

In this progress report, we are able to outline progress on a number of fronts. We are coming close to completing one initial project (Family Outcome Measure). As you will also read below, we are starting on some exciting new projects (Systematic literature review, SW training in ABI, Psychosocial Assessment framework project, Satellite Symposium in Dublin in 2010). We feature a new article about people with ABI written by Dr Thomas Strandberg that was recently published in the journal Social Work in Health Care. Our membership continues to grow – we now have 85 members. Finally in previous progress reports we highlighted profiles of the INSWABI co-convenors (Report No. 2) and two of our UK members (Report No.3). In this report, we feature profiles of two of our Canadian members and also report on an INSWABI poster that was presented as part of an ABI conference in Toronto. Enjoy the read.

Dr Grahame Simpson
Co-convenor

Patti Simonson
Co-convenor

1. Family Outcome Measure project

It is with great pleasure that I can announce that the data collection phase for the Family Outcome project is now complete. We have ended up collecting 404 datasets with high quality data from the 14 rehabilitation centres involved in the project over the past 2 years. Fantastic job everyone across Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK involved in the project.

Associate Professor Julie Winstanley is currently completing the first phase of the data analysis – completing the factor analysis. She has been pleased that the solution generated by the analysis has been very robust, involving about 44 of the 82 items in 4 factors. I am hoping to meet with on 23rd February to have a look at these results. We will then circulate the initial result to all the participating centres so you can cross-check the solution generated by the factor analysis against the larger pool of items and we can ensure that there hasn't been anything critical issues left out. Once we have finalised the measure, I will then complete the analysis by examining the psychometric properties of the FOM using the additional data that was collected at Liverpool.

By mid year it should be available for distribution to everyone to start using in your clinical settings. We have decided to keep it in the public domain so it will be available to anyone to use with no barriers of cost or professional discipline.

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I am also hoping that we can present the results at two major international conferences in 2010, the International Brain Injury Association Congress in Washington in March and the International Conference of Social Work in Health and Mental Health at the end of June/early July (Dublin 2010 - for more about this conference see below). The results will also be written up and submitted to a peer review journal for publication. Finally, we will also include the FOM in our psychosocial assessment framework (also see below).

There are then a number of further developments that we can undertake which won't need all 14 centres. These include developing a briefer version of the FOM (with maybe 10-20 items), validating the measure with other acquired brain injury groups such as stroke (our initial trial has involved Traumatic Brain Injury only) and seeing if it can be adapted to the needs of families with a relative in a Persistent Vegetative or Minimally Conscious State.

2. Meet two of our INSWABI members in Toronto Canada

Karen Sasaki is a social worker at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, Canada's largest adult rehabilitation and complex continuing care hospital, and one of several sites involved in the recently completed Family Outcome Study. For the past 16 years, Karen has worked in the area of acquired brain injury rehabilitation and currently provides outpatient social work services in the ABI Day Hospital. Karen is also involved in the development and implementation of health promotion groups for people with Multiple Sclerosis, field practice education for MSW students, and clinical ethics consultation for staff & students in the Neuro Rehabilitation Program.

Karen received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Toronto in 1990 and is registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.



Jessica McCallum is a social worker at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. Jessica received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Toronto in 2007 and began working in the inpatient acquired brain injury program. As a new clinician, Jessica looks forward to the learning opportunities that INSWABI is pursuing and the further development of international social work partnerships and knowledge exchange.

3. Systematic literature review on SW practice in ABI

A group of the INSWABI academics are currently finalising the methodology for undertaking a systematic review of the literature on ABI produced by social workers to date. We feel this will be a useful stocktaking exercise that will provide us with a better sense of the body of knowledge produced by social workers to date in the field of ABI and to identify directions for future development and work. We are hoping that Dr Andy Mantell will be able to present early results from the work at the 2010 Dublin conference.

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4. Social work training in ABI

A group of seven Senior Social Workers including a number of INSWABI members (Martine Simons, Grahame Simpson, Maggie McFadyen Marianne Bush) have been meeting in New South Wales over the past 18 months to develop training materials for Social Workers practising in ABI. We have also been assisted by Dr Thomas Strandberg (Sweden) and Dr Andy Mantell (UK).

At the first stage we developed and presented a 1 hour lecture/2 hour tutorial in 2008 as part of a Social Work in Illness and Disability subject, in the 3rd year Social Work course at the University of Sydney (in Australia social work is a 4 year undergraduate Bachelor's degree). The lecture and tutorial introduced the students to SW practice in ABI.

We are now developing a set of 4 one-day workshops aimed at training graduate social workers practising in the field of ABI. The workshops could eventually provide a template for a post-graduate certificate or diploma program in SW practice in ABI. The workshop content and materials are still in the early stage of development.

A separate report will be circulated by early March providing an update on this project and seeking feedback/ suggestions from INSWABI members.

5. Development of a Psychosocial assessment framework

The next major clinical project that we will undertake will be the development of a Psychosocial Assessment framework.

One challenge social workers face when they start working in a brain injury unit, stroke rehabilitation ward or community brain injury service, is the lack of guidelines to draw upon as they start to do initial psychosocial assessments of clients and/or their families.

Social workers find themselves having to continuously reinvent the wheel in terms of devising assessment approaches. The current project aims to develop a psychosocial assessment framework that social workers internationally can use to ensure that they conduct comprehensive high quality assessments.

The Psychosocial Assessment Framework will include the following 4 components.

(i) Semi-structured interview

- ◆ a guide to the subject areas that SWers should cover in a psychosocial assessment
- ◆ sample questions that can be used

(ii) Companion Manual

- ◆ a resource containing information and strategies to assist SWers conducting assessment interviews (e.g. what to do if person has memory problems, is sexually disinhibited etc.)

(iii) Assessment measures resource

- ◆ a list of assessment measures that are in the public domain and can be used by SWers to supplement information gathered in semi-structured interview (e.g. our own Family Outcome Measure)

(iv) Psychosocial Complexity Index

- ◆ an index score that provides a summary score representing the psychosocial complexity of a case

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6. Conferences

6.1 INSWABI poster at the 4th bi-annual Toronto Acquired Brain Injury Network Conference



The 4th bi-annual Toronto Acquired Brain Injury Network Conference was held on November 3 & 4th, 2008 with over 400 participants from across Canada and New York State. Focussing on the latest developments in research and practice in acute care, rehabilitation and life following brain injury, the conference featured four keynote addresses by Dr. Deirdre Dawson, Caron Gan, Carolyn Matthews and Dr. Donald Meichenbaum. The program also included 32 podium presentations and 20 poster presentations, including our very own INSWABI poster, *Building Capacity Locally Through Global Collaboration: The Value of the International Network of Social Workers in ABI*.

Of particular interest was the keynote address by Caron Gan (Family Therapist, Family Support Service, Bloorview Kids Rehab, Toronto) - *Weaving a Web of Family Support after ABI* which highlighted the development, implementation and evaluation of a structured, empirically-based intervention for adolescents with ABI and their families. Called BIFI-A (Brain Injury Family Intervention for Adolescents), this program is adapted from Dr. Jeffrey Kreutzer's (Virginia Commonwealth University) Brain Injury Family Intervention (BIFI) for adults with ABI, and supports families in creating a web of support within and outside of their own family system. Subsequent to the conference, a two-day workshop will be held in Toronto on February 12 & 13, 2009 to introduce ABI clinicians to the BIFI and BIFI-A models and

provide skills training to better support families in areas deemed to be critical in enhancing outcomes post-brain injury.



Jessica's Conference Highlight – I attended an excellent session presented by Marta Helliesen – *Sexuality and Brain Plasticity Post ABI*. Marta is a private clinician and sex therapist working in New York City. Through her research and clinical work she explores the relationship between the brain-body connection of sexuality and the role of new learning post-ABI. Her presentation effectively challenged popular misconceptions about sex and sexuality post-ABI and was directed primarily at clinicians working in the field.

The most informative part of the presentation was Helliesen's challenge to clinicians regarding barriers to addressing sexuality as part of our work. Clearly, one major barrier is the clinician's own values and beliefs about sexuality. Without a genuine exploration of these, we are really unprepared to objectively and creatively interact with patients/clients about their sexual needs. This self-examination is important in any interaction between the clinician and patient, but it could be seen as critical in the area of sexuality. Overall, it was a very engaging presentation.

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6.2 Application for Satellite symposium at 2010 International Social Work Conference



In 2010, the 6th International Conference of Social Work in Health and Mental Health will be held in Dublin Ireland. These conferences run Satellite symposia which are one day mini-conferences within the conference on a special theme.

In 2008 Grahame Simpson (AUS), Thomas Strandberg (SWE), Martha Vungkhanching (US), Patti Simonson (UK) and Anne O'Loughlin (IRE) all collaborated on an Expression of Interest which was submitted to the Organising committee to have a one-day Satellite Symposium on ABI in rehabilitation and social work.

We received a positive response from the organising committee and so have now submitted a formal proposal. We are suggesting that the day would be held at the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dublin and have a morning of presentations about ABI, rehabilitation and social work (including the presentation on the Family Outcome Measure, the progress report on the literature review and more).

If this proposal is approved it will be the most significant international gathering of social workers working in the field of ABI to ever be held!!! We hope to hear back from the Organising Committee over the next few months.

7. New article

Dr Thomas Strandberg, INSWABI member from Sweden, has had a recent article published in Social Work in Health Care with the title 'Adults with acquired traumatic brain injury: A theoretical analysis from a social recognition perspective'. The article reports on qualitative research that Thomas did in analysing interviews with 15 people for his PhD. If you want to find out more about the article or Thomas's research, you are welcome to e-mail him at

thomas.strandberg@orebro.se

8. INSWABI website

The Brain Injury Social Work Group UK is kindly hosting the INSWABI web pages.

Log onto www.biswg.co.uk, and click onto the INSWABI tab on the left hand side of the page.

9. Pass this on.

Please circulate the progress report to any of your colleagues who you think might be interested.

10. Interested in joining INSWABI? Please contact

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