Management of Traumatic Brain Injury in an Acute Rehab Setting

Jennie Thompson, MOT, OTR/L
Riverside Methodist Hospital Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit
Columbus, Ohio

Objectives

- Provide clinical examples of common behaviors and deficits during TBI recovery
- Review strategies for management of patients with patients at Ranchos level IV and V in an acute rehab setting
- Discuss practical suggestions for treatment planning for entry level practitioners

Image from http://www.brain-injury-online.com/life-and-living-after-brain-injury.html

Ranchos IV: Confused-Agitated

- Heightened state of activity, confusion, disorientation
- May exhibit aggressive behaviors
- Agitation appears related to internal confusion

Ranchos IV treatment implications

- Use a calm, even voice.
- Introduce yourself and orient the patient every interaction.
- Ignore inappropriate sexual comments or gestures.
- Avoid talking to and touching the patient at the same time.

Ranchos V: Confused-inappropriate

- Appears alert, responds to simple commands, distractible
- Does not concentrate on task
- Agitated responses to external stimuli
- Verbally inappropriate
- Does not learn new information

Ranchos V treatment implications

- Continue to orient the patient every interaction.
- Redirect false statements, but do not argue.
- Control the treatment environment.
- Ignore and redirect inappropriate comments.
- Keep cues and directions simple.
- Do not trust the patient's judgment.

Team-centered Management

- Structured, set schedule
  - Therapy in 1 hour blocks
  - Rest breaks – no TV, phone, conversation
  - Set visitor times
- No more than 2 visitors at a time
- No caffeine
- Education of caregivers is key

Managing specific behaviors

- Confusion
- Confabulation
- Perseveration

Image from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wendy's

Managing specific behaviors

- Agitation
- Resistance to treatment
- Impulsivity
- Lack of inhibition
- Sexually inappropriate behavior

References

- Gutman, S. (2001). Traumatic Brain Injury. In Pedretti, L. & Early, M. (Eds.) Occupational therapy: Practice skills for physical dysfunction (pp. 671-701). St. Louis: Mosby.