Prediction of psychological distress among persons with spinal cord injury or acquired brain injury and their significant others

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Objective
To identify variables measured at the start of first inpatient rehabilitation that predict psychological distress among persons with spinal cord injury or acquired brain injury (pwSCI/ABI) and their significant others (SO) others 6 months after discharge.

Participants
157 dyads of adult pwSCI/ABI (resp. n = 79 / n = 78) and their adult SO.
PwSCI/ABI: 57% male, mean age = 56 years (SD = 15), 38% high educational level.
SO: 78% partner.

Main results
Sociodemographic and injury-related variables were not or weakly related to psychological distress, psychological variables more strongly.

Outcome
Psychological distress, measured with the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale.

Predictors
Potential predictors: sociodemographic, injury-related, psychological.
Adaptive psychological characteristics:
- Combination of self-efficacy, proactive coping, purpose in life and resilience

Analyses
Pearson correlations between potential predictors and follow-up psychological distress.
Multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVA) to investigate independent predictors.

Baseline variables persons with SCI/ABI
- Sex
- Age
- Education
- Diagnosis
- Physical independence
- Psychological distress
- Adaptive psychological charact.
- Maladaptive psychological charact.

Psychological distress 6 months after discharge
Persons with SCI/ABI

Baseline variables significant others
- Sex
- Age
- Education
- SO is partner
- Psychological distress
- Adaptive psychological charact.
- Maladaptive psychological charact.

Only bivariately correlated; Independent predictor; narrow line = correlation coeff ≤ .30; thick line = correlation coeff > .30

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Main results
Sociodemographic and injury-related variables were not or weakly related to psychological distress, psychological variables more strongly.

There were crosswise relations between pwSCI/ABI and SO, but less strongly than intra-personal relations.

SCI versus ABI
Results were comparable across diagnoses.

Independent predictors distress PwSCI/ABI
- Educational level SO
- Own baseline psychological distress
- Own maladaptive psychological characteristics
Explained variance = 41.9%.

Independent predictor distress SO
- Only own baseline psychological distress
Explained variance = 40.4%.

Conclusions
Primarily one’s own baseline psychological distress and psychological characteristics are important in the prediction of later psychological distress.
Screening of these variables could help to identify persons at risk for psychological distress.

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