

FOREWORD

In the first of two issues on traumatic brain injury, Dr. Mark Ylvisaker and his colleagues described the long-term disruptions in cognition and communication that typically accompany severe closed head injuries. The role that impaired executive system functions seem to play in the diverse signs and symptoms evidenced by those with traumatic brain injuries was discussed, and the implication of such dysfunctions on the accurate assessment of cognitive and communication abilities in real-life situations was critically examined. More important, a number of formal and functional evaluation procedures were suggested for meeting these assessment challenges.

For many survivors of traumatic brain injury, life-long impairments prevent resumption of their preinjury roles and responsibilities. Even the functional gains that they may achieve in a rehabilitation setting often fail to generalize to real-life situations. In time, many survivors' relationships with spouses, other family members, and friends may also become dysfunctional and disintegrate. For this second issue Dr. Ylvisaker has assembled a multidisciplinary group of professionals to address some of the many challenges that long-term rehabilitation often poses for those who survive a severe traumatic brain injury.

As you will find, these challenges are not limited to clinical management issues for these survivors but extend to the successful negotiation of a variety of barriers that are indigenous to the payment, service delivery, and social support systems in this country. Fortunately, the contributors to this issue seem undaunted by such challenges and have provided us with a number of creative directions to explore with these patients and their families and the health care and social systems with which they must interact. The strategies and tactics that they propose provide us with a thoughtful, useful compilation of management alternatives for addressing the rehabilitation needs of the rapidly growing population of brain-injured teenagers and young adults in the United States.

Richard F. Curlee, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief