

PREFACE

I am pleased to present two special issues of *Seminars* devoted to traumatic brain injury (TBI). TBI is a disability category that has emerged from near-total obscurity to prominence in rehabilitation programs and discussions in a brief decade and a half. When the National Head Injury Foundation completed its first survey of health care agencies in 1981, fewer than 50 specialized TBI rehabilitation programs were identified in the United States. That number has since skyrocketed to over 600.

With this growth in clinical programs has come a flood of publications in the clinical and research literatures. It is very difficult to guess how much of this will stand the test of time and critical scrutiny. However, the time for this scrutiny is surely at hand.

There were three primary intentions behind the selection of topics and authors for these two issues. On the one hand, I wanted to bring into head injury discussions a wealth of research that has evolved in other fields concerned with similar issues. This thought motivated the selection of Meichenbaum's paper on executive functions and Pressley's on cognitive strategies (second issue of this series). In both cases, the authors draw on many years of research in cognitive development and applied cognitive psychology. Second, I also wanted to encourage speech-language pathologists to see their territory in head injury rehabilitation as one that is shared with many related professionals. For this reason, authors in these two issues include six psychologists of varying clinical orientations and one social worker in addition to several speech-language pathologists.

The third intention was to highlight assessment and treatment issues within speech-language pathology that are somewhat unique in their application to individuals with TBI. In this issue, the articles on assessment by Groher and Ochipa and by Hartley highlight the scope and limits of formal language testing with this population and emphasize the importance of systematic functional assessment. The papers by Mateer and Sohlberg and by Szekeres address issues in cognitive rehabilitation, a hotly disputed field of intervention within TBI rehabilitation, from two quite differ-

ent perspectives. This issue ends with a discussion of social skills intervention, possibly the “bottom-line” of the bottom-line issues with this population.

The second issue includes articles on executive functions, teaching compensatory cognitive strategies, augmentative communication, community-based services, working with families, and creating a positive

communication culture for rehabilitation. I hope that these papers will help to focus your thinking and stimulate your clinical creativity in this relatively new field of rehabilitation.

Mark Ylvisaker, Ph.D.
Guest Editor