

Spinal Cord Injury Vocational Integration Program: Predictive Outcome Model Over Time for Employment (PrOMOTE)

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Project Summary/Abstract

Unemployment is a serious and prevalent problem among persons with spinal cord injury (SCI). The proposed study entitled Predictive Outcome Model Over Time for Employment (PrOMOTE) will be an extension of the Spinal Cord Injury Vocational Integration Program (SCI-VIP), (VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Grant # B3773R, 7/1/05- 6/30/10). SCI-VIP is a prospective, multi-site, randomized, controlled trial of Supported Employment (SE) versus standard vocational rehabilitation care in a population of veterans with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI). Preliminary outcome analyses of SCI-VIP indicated that subjects in the SE group were over 3 times more likely to obtain paid employment than those in the Control group (OR = 3.4, 95% CI: 1.4 – 8.3; $p = .007$), after controlling for differences at baseline and for ASIA rating.

Extending this work through PrOMOTE to examine longitudinal outcomes will result in a rich and unique database that will help guide VA in serving employment needs of veterans with SCI. The PrOMOTE study will establish a large national database of over 2000 veterans with SCI, containing extensive employment, medical, functional and psychosocial data, with follow-up periods in the 5-10 year range. This study will operationalize the critical features of supported employment that lead to obtaining and maintaining employment over time in SCI. This work will also extend the cost-effectiveness analysis and budget impact analysis to include longer term costs and quality of life outcomes.

The immediate objectives of the proposed PrOMOTE study include:

- 1) Develop a psychometrically sound instrument (called the Supported Employment Rating Scale (SERS)) that assesses, on a continuous scale of measurement, the extent of supported employment received by subjects.
- 2) Examine the relationship of SE levels (as measured by the SERS) and subjects' ability to achieve employment.
- 3) Examine the relationship of SE levels (as measured by the SERS), to cost-effectiveness and quality of life.
- 4) Compare those who have received SE to those who received standard care (conventional VR) on time to employment and duration of employment over an extended follow up period.
- 5) Examine impact of duration of injury on successful employment outcomes.

Long-term objectives include:

- 1) Establish a large national database of veterans with SCI, containing extensive employment, medical, functional and psychosocial data to inform and guide research on topic.
- 2) Examine the sustainability of employment outcomes and the impact of continuing SE following the experimental phase of the Spinal Cord Injury Vocational Integration Program study (SCI-VIP).
- 3) Compare the effect of continued vocational services versus discontinued vocational services on duration of employment over time.
- 4) Examine employment outcomes among newly returning OIF/OEF veterans.
- 5) Assess the cost-effectiveness of SE versus conventional VR over the extended follow-up period.
- 6) Assess the anticipated budget impact of adoption of the SE program by VHA.
- 7) Describe salient themes that address the quality, effectiveness, outcomes, and participant experience of the SE program. VA