

Title: A Way into Empathy: Seeing Life from a Brain Injury Patient's Perspective

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In a study aimed at understanding life with TBI from the patient's perspective, the presenters gave cameras to patients with TBI and asked them to take photographs of their lives—including things that hindered or helped their recovery. Subjects then met with the researchers and talked about their photographs. Qualitative analysis of photographs and interview text resulted in visual illness narratives that provide emotionally powerful insights into lived experience with brain injury. For one patient injured a year ago, living with TBI meant feeling frustration and confusion with himself and his surroundings, as well as living with family and friends who were now frustrated and confused by him. The study suggests that giving cameras to TBI patients may enhance their ability to talk about topics that are difficult to articulate or embarrassing. Additionally, patients reported feelings of wholeness, confidence, and pride in producing personal narratives. Engendering visuals related to real lives may help clinicians to be more emotionally attentive in the therapeutic encounter and encourage engagement and mutual learning on the part of providers and TBI patients alike. The findings suggest a model for listening to TBI patient stories.

Clinical/Research Objectives: At the conclusion of this presentation, participants should be able to:

- Explain how to use patient-generated photographs to understand the experience of individuals with TBI.
- Identify principles of qualitative data analysis resulting in visual illness narratives.
- Identify common themes in the photographs and illness narratives of individuals with TBI.
- Generate ideas for potential application of this study methodology to clinical and support group contexts as well as to future avenues of research.