Barriers to Vision Rehabilitation: Factors Related to Coping Strategies in Individuals with Low-Vision

N. Dupaselle 1, 2, W. Wiltch 1, 2, N. Robillard 4, & O. Overbury 1, 2, 5
1 School of Optometry, University of Montreal, 2 CIRIR, 3 Integrated Program in Neuroscience, McGill University, 4 Ophthalmology, Hôpital Notre-Dame, 5 Ophthalmology, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada

Purpose

• Coping strategies are an important factor in the ability to adapt well to any major life event.
• For example, it is extremely difficult to adapt to adventitious vision loss. 1, 2
• Coping strategies can be both positive and negative, which can determine if a person successfully adapts to vision loss.
• The use of negative coping strategies may prevent a person from seeking beneficial assistance such as vision rehabilitation services.
• Data from the Montreal Barriers to Vision Rehabilitation Study were analyzed to determine which factors were significantly related to adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies.

Method

• Participants: Demographic data from 591 participants with visual impairment were obtained through a demographic interview.
  - Age: 26 – 100, M = 74.46 SD = 13.32
  - 43.9% male
  - Visual acuity: 20/70 to NLP
• Materials: Brief COPE, an abbreviated version of the COPE inventory. This 28-question scale assesses 14 coping strategies, 10 of which are adaptive and 4 maladaptive.

Example: I've been saying to myself this isn't real (denial – negative strategy)
I've been taking action to try and make the situation better (active coping – positive strategy)

Results

• Analyses conducted using PASW
• Correlational analyses conducted for continuous demographic variables (duration and age)
• One-way ANOVAs conducted for discrete demographic variables (awareness, education, marital status and support)
• Alpha set at 0.05
• Significant differences were found in 5 of the 6 demographic variables: age, awareness, education, marital status and support.
• Age was only found to be significantly correlated with denial.

Conclusion

• Younger individuals with a higher education, and who are aware of vision rehabilitation services, were found to be more likely to use adaptive coping strategies such as acceptance, proactive coping, and the use of emotional support, than older, less educated individuals living independently on others.
• Research has suggested that individuals are better able to adjust to their vision impairment the sooner they receive the aid of rehabilitation professionals. 6
• Thus, it is important that individuals who are less likely to use positive, proactive strategies of coping be identified and offered the assistance that they need as soon as possible following their diagnosis of visual impairment.
• Eye-care professionals play a key role in this identification, and are most likely the first opportunity individuals with adventitious vision loss have to receive immediate assistance in adjusting to their vision loss.

References: