

# Cultural differences may impact neurologic and psychiatric rehabilitation of Spanish speakers

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The number of people with neurological and psychiatric disorders in Spanish-speaking countries has increased over the past two decades. The February issue of *NeuroRehabilitation* assesses important factors that should be considered in rehabilitating Spanish-speaking individuals suffering from these disorders.

"Though much work has been done in this area for Anglo-Saxon populations, very little work has focused on Spanish-speaking individuals," says Guest Editor Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla, PhD, of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation of Virginia Commonwealth University. "As cultural differences may influence the rehabilitation process, this is an important area of research."

Many individuals with neurological or psychiatric disorders have physical, cognitive, behavioral, and/or [emotional difficulties](#) that they and their families must face, resulting in a need for rehabilitative services. However, Spanish-speaking individuals both in the US and abroad have limited access to rehabilitation programs. "In developing countries especially, support groups, individual [psychological treatment](#), cognitive rehabilitation programs, vocational and financial assistance, and caregiver resources are scarce," says Dr. Arango-Lasprilla.

Papers in the topical issue examine the development and evaluation of rehabilitation programs for Spanish-speaking individuals, looking at such

important issues as vocational training to improve satisfaction with life for [Hispanic patients](#) with [traumatic brain injury](#) (TBI); [cognitive rehabilitation](#) to improve schizophrenia treatment; the use of the generation effect to improve [learning and memory](#) in Spanish-speaking individuals with TBI; a holistic neurorehabilitation program for patients with acquired brain injury; and the influence of family and caregivers on recovery from TBI.

Two studies of particular note examine the predictors of satisfaction with life and employment, which are considered to be two of the most important outcomes associated with successful rehabilitation for individuals with TBI.

"These papers are among the first in the literature to address the unique characteristics of Spanish-speaking individuals with neurologic and psychiatric disabilities. Collectively, the findings provide guidance to clinicians and highlight the need for further research in this area," Dr. Arango-Lasprilla concludes.

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