

# Researchers link residential characteristics with productivity one year after brain injury

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Model system researchers have examined the factors that influence productive activity one year after traumatic brain injury (TBI). Their article, Lequerica AH, Botticello A, O'Neill J, Lengenfelder J, Krch D, Chiaravalloti ND, et al. "Relationship between Hispanic nativity, residential environment and productive activity among individuals with traumatic brain injury: A TBI Model Systems Study," was published ahead of print by the *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation* on May 31.

The research team, which included investigators from seven regional TBI Model Systems, studied data on 706 Hispanic individuals in the database of the TBI Model System, funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). They looked at the influence of nativity, ie, whether individuals who identified as Hispanic were native (57.9% born in the U.S.) or foreign-born (42.1% from Central and South America, Caribbean, Europe, and other). They also looked at residential characteristics, including the proportion of foreign language speakers in their communities.

The study uncovered new information about the factors influencing productivity among foreign-born Hispanics with TBI. "For this group, living in an area with a high number of foreign language speakers had a positive effect on their outcomes," noted lead author Anthony H. Lequerica, Ph.D., "which was not what we expected." One year after [traumatic brain injury](#), foreign-born Hispanics living in areas with high proportions of foreign language speakers were 2.8 times more likely to engage in productive activities such as employment and volunteer

activities, compared with those living in areas with fewer foreign language speakers," he emphasized.

"This illustrates the importance of research within diverse communities of individuals with TBI. A complex combination of factors affect outcomes in ways that may differ from the mainstream majority culture," Dr. Lequerica stated. "It emphasizes the importance of tailoring interventions to the individual with TBI, learning about the neighborhoods to which they are returning, and taking these factors into account in the continuum of care." Dr. Lequerica, senior research scientist in TBI Research at Kessler Foundation, is an investigator with the Northern New Jersey TBI Model System.

**More information:** Anthony H. Lequerica et al, Relationship Between Hispanic Nativity, Residential Environment, and Productive Activity Among Individuals With Traumatic Brain Injury, *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation* (2018). [DOI: 10.1097/HTR.0000000000000398](https://doi.org/10.1097/HTR.0000000000000398)

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