



## INTRODUCTION

- About **1.5 million people** obtain a TBI every year (CDC, 2023)
- Individuals with TBI usually encounter **cognitive, physical, and emotional difficulties** which limit their **leisure participation** during the recovery period
- Active leisure participation is vital in improving **quality of life**, developing a sense of **autonomy**, and **aiding recovery** after a traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- There has been a **lack of research on young adults** with TBI
- The Occupational Therapy Practitioner (OTP) Role is to **address barriers to increase participation** in daily life, as well as **modify and adapt leisure activities**

## PURPOSE AND KEY DEFINITIONS

**Research Question and Purpose:** Summarize peer-reviewed literature regarding young adults with TBI and the barriers that affect their engagement in leisure programs in their community environment.

Study will support OTPs to advocate, provide resources, educate the community, and maximize this population's independence.

| Language                            | Definition  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)</b> | An injury to the brain that occurs when the head has been impacted or hit. Ranges from mild to severe. TBI can affect the way a person thinks, acts, and/or feels |
| <b>Leisure</b>                      | A pursuit or task an individual engages in for enjoyment  |

## METHODS

**Databases:** SCOPUS, PsycInfo, Web of Science, CINAHL, and PubMed  
**Key Words:** Traumatic brain injury, leisure, leisure participation, barriers

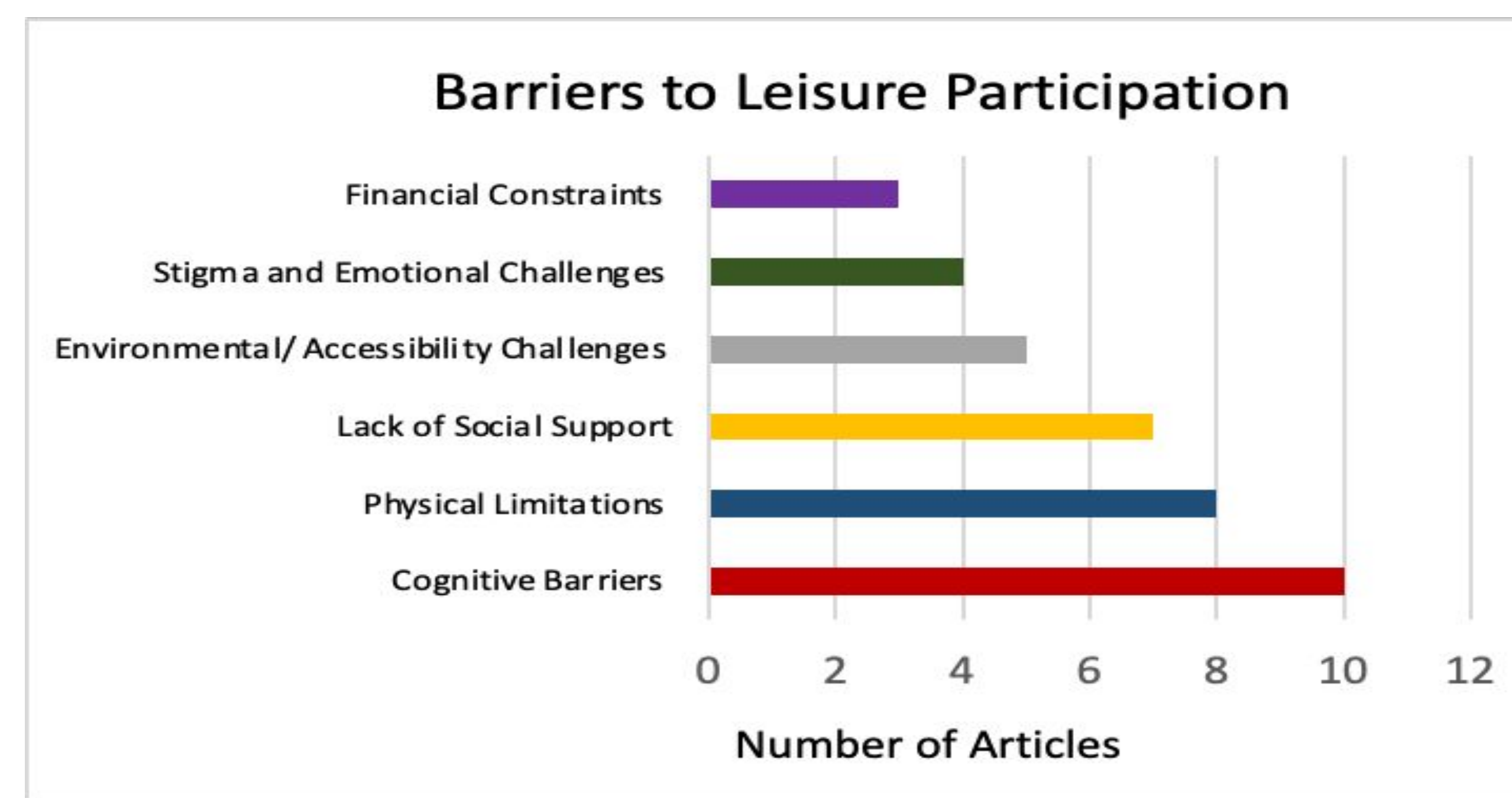
| Inclusion Criteria  | Exclusion Criteria   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild to severe TBI is the primary condition studied (must be included in Acquired Brain Injury)</li> <li>• Young adults (ages 18-26)</li> <li>• Study focused on leisure activities (main intervention or outcome observed)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No cognitive, intellectual, or developmental disability</li> <li>• No chapters or whole books used for data collection</li> <li>• Articles did not specify a TBI diagnosis</li> </ul> |

**Titles Reviewed:** 337  
**Full Text Articles:** 60  
**Articles Included:** 10

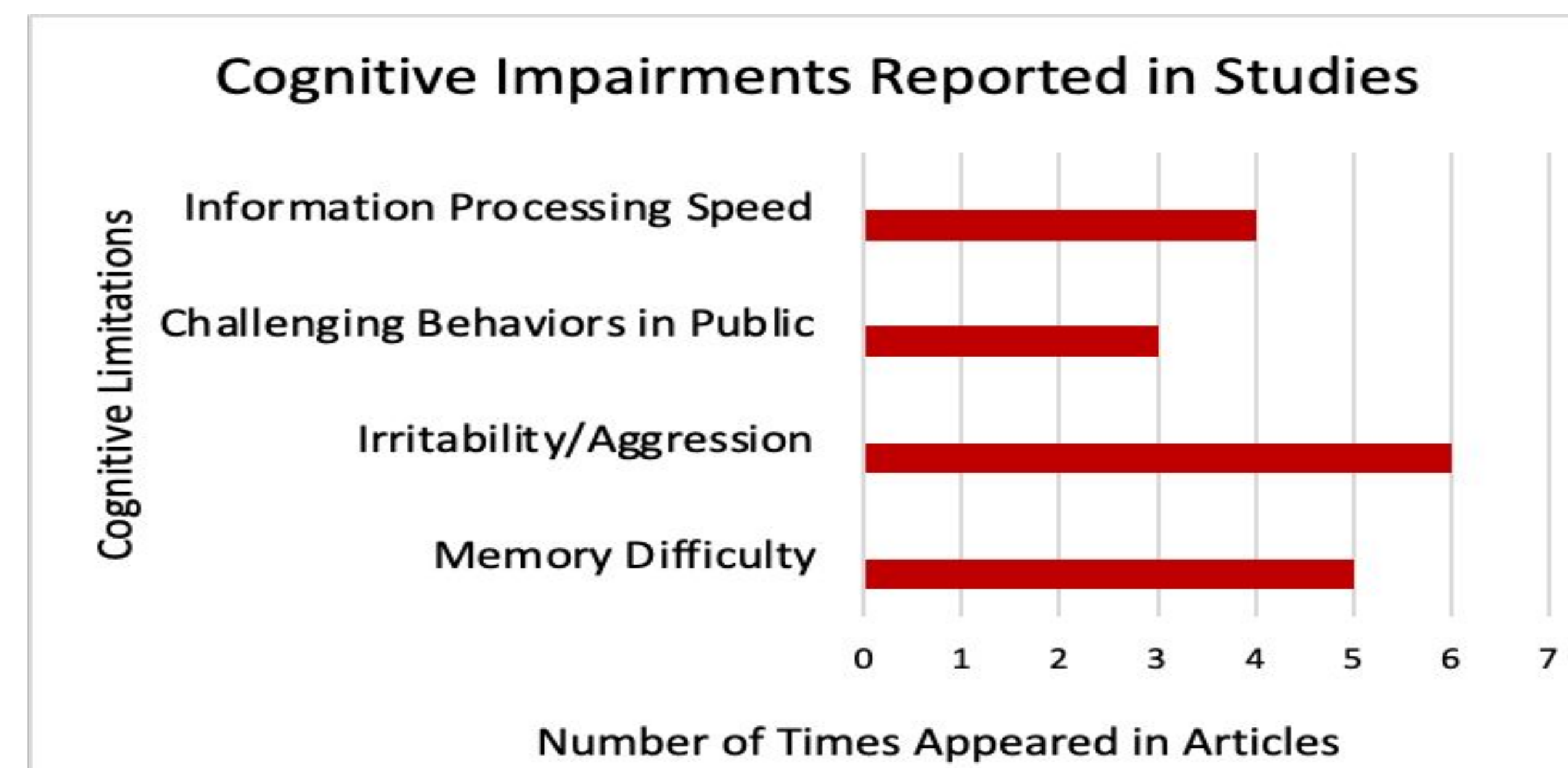
## RESULTS

**Article Types:** Of the 10 articles, 40% were qualitative, 20% quasi-randomized trials, 20% pre-post designs, and 10% each were cohort and observational studies. Sample sizes ranged from 1-150, with 50% between 1-25 participants, 20% between 50-75, and 10% in the ranges of 25-50, 75-100, and 125-150.

The six main categories of barriers to leisure participation for young adults with TBI were **cognitive impairments, physical limitations, social isolation, stigma and emotional challenges, transportation and accessibility, and financial constraints.**

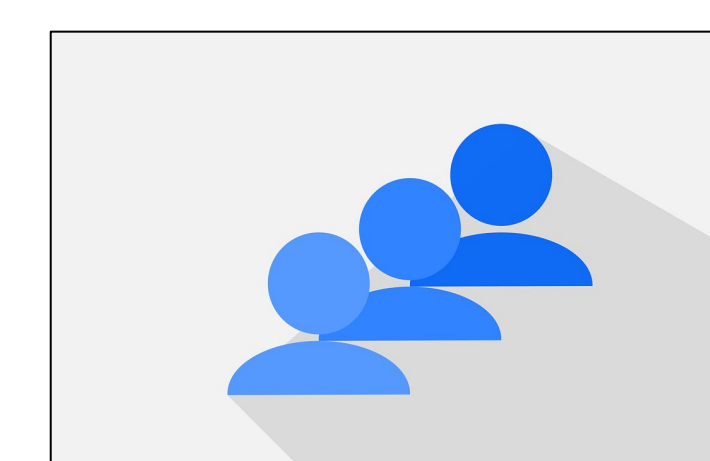


Cognitive limitations frequently reported as an individual's **memory difficulties, irritability/aggression, processing speed**, and challenging behaviors in public such as outbursts and impulsivity— underscoring the **importance for OTPs to develop and adapt leisure activities to support these unique cognitive needs.**



## PARTICIPANTS

- Adults ages 18-26
- Majority identified as male (88.1 % male and 11.9 % female)
- Studies included individuals with all levels of TBI severity
- Many participants lived in private residence, supported by caregiver and family members



## DISCUSSION

### OTP Role in Addressing:

- **Cognitive Limitations:** **Low anger and frustration tolerance** were frequently reported cognitive limitations, which significantly impede attention, concentration, and emotional regulation— key components for enjoying leisure activities
  - ➔ OTPs can design tailored **interventions focused on improving attention and emotional regulation strategies** to help those with TBI to better engage in leisure
- **Physical Limitations:** Pain, fatigue, limited range of motion, and balance difficulties can influence fall risk during leisure
  - ➔ OTPs can recommend **adaptive equipment or activities**
- **Lack of Social Support:** Lack of family and friends' support
  - ➔ OTPs can implement family education and create initiatives like **peer support groups and community leisure programs**

### Risk for Bias:

- **Measurement Bias:** Many studies involved **self-reported measures**, which can introduce subjectivity into results.
- To enhance the validity of this poster's findings, future research should prioritize objective measures

## CONCLUSION

- **Young adults with TBI do experience barriers** to leisure
- The **most common barriers include cognitive and physical limitations and lack of social support**
- **OTPs can play a transformative role** in helping individuals with TBI re-engage in leisure activities they once enjoyed
  - ➔ OTPs can support their **reintegration into the community** through **leisure programs** or addressing barriers through implementing **cognitive, adaptive, and community-based strategies**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Examine Young Adults' Leisure</b>    | Many studies combine young adults with older adults, making results not generalizable to young adults.   |
| <b>Adapt Activities and Environment</b> | Modify leisure activities and settings (e.g. in person vs. virtual) to support recovery and increase participation.  |
| <b>Create Community Based Programs</b>  | Develop programs that encourage leisure exploration and that address financial and social barriers.<br><i>Examples:</i> Community gardens that build social connections and address food insecurity. |

## REFERENCES AND CONTACT INFO



**Lydia Lewis**  
[Lydia.Lewis@tufts.edu](mailto:Lydia.Lewis@tufts.edu)  
**Niki Yan**  
[Xiaoyu.Yan@tufts.edu](mailto:Xiaoyu.Yan@tufts.edu)  
**Lauren Russell**  
[Lauren.Russell@tufts.edu](mailto:Lauren.Russell@tufts.edu)

**Ruanne Catapang**  
[Ruanne.Catapang@tufts.edu](mailto:Ruanne.Catapang@tufts.edu)  
**Yuna Chung**  
[Yuna.Chung@tufts.edu](mailto:Yuna.Chung@tufts.edu)  
**Nancy Baker**  
[Nancy.Baker@tufts.edu](mailto:Nancy.Baker@tufts.edu)