

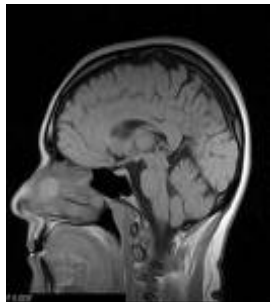


## *International Foundation For Chronic Disabilities* University Series in Disabilities Medicine

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### **The Mission of the IFCD and Introduction to the Concept of Chronic Brain Disorder (CBD)**

The mission of the IFCD is to improve the overall health and quality of life of adults with chronic disabilities in general, but its primary focus will be on those with disabilities that result specifically from Chronic Brain Disorders (CBD). This is because, of the disabilities experienced by many millions of persons worldwide, those that result from Chronic Brain Disorders (CBD) are the most devastating, complex, and difficult to treat, as well as those most likely to be improperly evaluated and managed.



Chronic Brain Disorders (CBD) fall into three major categories: 1) Childhood Onset, 2) Younger Adult Onset, and 3) Aging Related Onset. Childhood Onset Chronic Brain Disorders are generally known as "developmental disabilities" and include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism. Examples of causes of Younger Adult Onset Chronic Brain Disorders include Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and hypoxic injury from near drowning accidents. Examples of Aging Related Onset Chronic Brain Disorders include strokes and Alzheimer's disease.

Regardless of the time of onset (childhood, younger adult, or aging adult) or the cause (genetic, accidental, or from diseases), adults with chronic brain disorders may experience one or more complications of chronic brain disorders. These "complications" generally fall into four major categories: 1) cognitive dysfunction, 2) motor dysfunction, 3) seizures, and 4) destructive behavioral problems. In addition, all four of these complications can lead to a variety of health consequences such as polypharmacy, chronic gastrointestinal problems, pulmonary disease, and osteoporosis. For example, the motor "complication", can lead to the "consequence" of osteoporosis.

If these health conditions become severe or remain improperly managed, "disability" may result. The IFCD defines disability as "substantial prolonged functional limitations in the activities of daily living that result from various underlying health conditions. Furthermore, because of the nature of the underlying health conditions, these functional limitations often require significant ongoing services and supports in order to maintain an optimal quality of life".

The complex and chronic nature of the health conditions experienced by adults with Chronic Brain Disorders (CBD) is further complicated by a health system that is fragmented, unresponsive, and unprepared to address complex chronic conditions in general. Our current health system is not "proactive" but instead is only well-prepared to react to acute conditions, which can be "cured".

Members of the IFCD have observed that those health conditions which frequently occur in adults with Chronic Brain Disorders (CBD), often go unrecognized and improperly treated. The reasons for this are complex and involve poorly designed social systems and inadequate training of health professionals, primarily physicians, dentists, and nurses. It has been the experience of IFCD members that when health conditions encountered in persons with Chronic Brain Disorders (CBD) are properly managed, "disability" can be reduced and quality of life improved.

Thus, it is primarily the mission of the IFCD to improve the health and quality of life of adults with Chronic Brain Disorders (CBD). In order to accomplish this mission, the IFCD will employ various strategies, including education, research, and advocacy.