



## Research Brief

### *Difficulty Obtaining Daily Necessities and Difficulty Obtaining SCI Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among People with Spinal Cord Injury*

#### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on millions of people worldwide. Our goal was to examine difficulties during the pandemic on the lives of those with traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI), and to identify the factors resulting in difficulties obtaining daily necessities and difficulties obtaining SCI services during the pandemic. There were 297 eligible participants, all of whom were 18+ years old, had a traumatic SCI, and a minimum of one year postinjury at the time of the study. They completed a longitudinal survey immediately prior to the pandemic (between 12/1/2019 and 3/11/2020), which we used to gather the information on difficulties obtaining daily necessities (difficulties to get food, medication, and routine medical/dental care) and difficulties obtaining SCI services (difficulties to get treatment for SCI-related problems, to maintain regular SCI equipment, and to get SCI supplies) prior to the pandemic. Of the 297 participants, 247 participants (83%) completed the follow-up survey during the pandemic between December 2020 and December 2021, where we re-assessed difficulties obtaining daily necessities and SCI services.

#### Key Findings

- 22% of participants had at least one difficulty obtaining daily necessities and 19% of participants had at least one difficulty obtaining SCI services.
- Younger, ambulatory, cervical 1-4 injury level, lower household income, more health conditions, and no routine healthcare access prior to the pandemic were associated with greater number of difficulties obtaining daily necessities during the pandemic.
- Female, non-ambulatory participants, marital relationships, having need for physical assistance, more health conditions, and no routine healthcare access prior to the pandemic related to greater number of difficulties obtaining SCI services during the pandemic.

#### What does this mean?

People with SCI have experienced living difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of particular importance, no routine healthcare access and more health conditions are related to more difficulties obtaining both daily necessities and SCI services after controlling the socio-demographics and injury characteristics.