
The authors of 3 articles in this issue have collaborated in an effort to advance the conceptualization and measurement of participation. These articles offer (1) a new tool for measuring participation, the Participation Assessment with Recombined Tools–Objective (PART–O), which combines items from widely used instruments in traumatic brain injury rehabilitation research; (2) 2 methods of scoring 17 items of PART–O, assessing relatively objective social role performance and yielding 3 subscale scores, as well as 2 alternative total scores (including 1 incorporating the concept of balance among types of participation), and (3) 19 enfranchisement items assessing the degree to which people with disability perceive they have the freedom to engage in social roles of their choosing while being accepted and valued by others.

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social roles of their choosing while being accepted and valued by others. The utility of these tools, assessing distinct aspects of participation, will be dependent on additional validation efforts including people with a wide variety of impairments and activity limitations, and the ability of the tools to help us to better understand participation and its relationship to other disability concepts, and identify interventions to improve participation and the lives of people with disability.

Improved conceptualization and measurement of participation is critical to the advancement of rehabilitation research. While the term participation was introduced by the ICF, the concept of societal level outcomes had been present in all disability models. Full participation in society is a primary goal of people with disabilities, their families, and the disability rights movement and legislation. Yet the field of rehabilitation remains without agreement on the best way to conceptualize and measure this important outcome. We offer the following 3 articles in an effort to help elaborate the ICF concept of participation as involvement in life situations.

References