



UCLA Study Shows Effects of TBI on Children are Long Term

A RECENT STUDY DONE BY UCLA RESEARCHERS AND PUBLISHED IN THE MAY 2009 ISSUE OF *Neuropsychology* SHOWS THAT THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY IN CHILDREN CAN LAST FOR YEARS.

THE RESEARCH, DONE BY UCLA POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW TALIN BABIKIAN AND UCLA PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY ROBERT ASARNOW, ANALYZED 28 ARTICLES ABOUT TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1988 AND 2007. THESE 28 ARTICLES COMPRISE ALL OF THE LITERATURE THAT IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY ON CHILDREN. THE STUDY LOOKED AT CHILDREN WITH THREE LEVELS OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY—MILD, MODERATE, AND SEVERE.

THE AUTHORS' MOST SIGNIFICANT FINDING IS THAT CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY FALL FARTHER BEHIND THEIR PEERS THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT. THE STUDY SHOWED THAT THE MORE SEVERE THE INJURY, THE WORSE THE OUTCOME WAS OVER TIME, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREAS OF INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING AND BRAIN SPEED. CHILDREN WITH MODERATE BRAIN INJURY WERE SHOWN TO HAVE SOME DIMINISHED CAPACITY MORE THAN 24 MONTHS AFTER THE INJURY, WHILE CHILDREN WITH SEVERE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SHOWED IMPAIRMENT IN ALL AREAS STUDIED—INCLUDING IQ, MEMORY, AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING—AFTER TWO YEARS.

THE STUDY SHOWED THAT CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE MILD TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY HAVE A MORE POSITIVE LONG-TERM PROGNOSIS. WHILE CHILDREN WITH MILD TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY OFTEN HAVE SOME IMMEDIATE COGNITIVE ISSUES, THESE SYMPTOMS TYPICALLY RESOLVE WITH TIME.

THE STUDY'S FINDINGS SHOW THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER DIAGNOSIS AND EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY. CHILDREN WITH INJURIES THAT FALL INTO THESE LEVELS SHOULD RECEIVE TARGETED TREATMENT, AND SHOULD BE FOLLOWED FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

THE STUDY ALSO SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

PREVENTION; IN ADDITION TO ENSURING THAT CHILDREN WHO SUFFER FROM BRAIN INJURY GET PROMPT AND APPROPRIATE TREATMENT, THE USE OF HELMETS, SEATBELTS, AND OTHER PROTECTIVE MEASURES IS ALSO ADVOCATED.