



Dazed and disoriented by head trauma claims? Study reveals increased cognitive deficits when TBI and PTSD combine

By Michael H. Weier • February 24, 2015

Medical and psychological researchers have reported numerous studies regarding the independent effects of mild traumatic brain injury¹ (mTBI)² and post-traumatic stress disorder³ (PTSD).⁴ A dearth of published research exists, however, that address long-term effects in patients that suffer from cumulative diagnoses of mTBI and PTSD.

The University of Kentucky announced *The Journal of Neurotrauma* will report a study of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan with diagnoses of mTBI or PTSD or both conditions.⁵ The research findings reportedly reveal veterans who suffer from both mTBI and PTSD have more significant cognitive and psychological deficits than veterans diagnosed with only one of the conditions. Though the purported research findings are not startling, they provide some evidence to suggest that patients, including injured workers, with combined diagnoses of mTBI and PTSD may require greater treatment or more accommodation for cognitive dysfunction than patients with a single diagnosis.



Michael H. Weier is firm President and Managing Partner at Reinisch Wilson Weier PC. He may be reached at 503.452.7268 or michaelw@rwwcomplaw.com.

¹The Brain Association of America declares the Centers for Disease Control defines mild traumatic brain injury if a head injury results in loss of consciousness of 30 minutes or less, or any period of observed or self-reported transient confusion, disorientation, impaired consciousness, loss of memory or seizure at or near the time of injury. (See web site: <http://www.biausa.org/mild-brain-injury.htm>)

² Vanderploeg, Rodney G., et al., Long-term neuropsychological outcomes following mild traumatic brain injury, *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society* / Volume 11 / Issue 03 / May 2005, pp 228-236; DeKosky, Steven T., et al., Perspective: Traumatic Brain Injury — Football, Warfare, and Long-Term Effects, *N Engl J Med* 2010; 363:1293-1299; De Beaumont, Louis, et al., Long-term and cumulative effects of sports concussion on motor cortex inhibition, *Neurosurgery*, August 2007, Vol. 61, Issue 2, pp 329-337; Vanderploeg, Rodney D., et. Al., Long-term morbidities following self-reported mild traumatic brain injury, *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*, Vol. 29, Issue 6, 2007, pp. 585-598; Daneshvar, Daniel H., et al., Long-Term Consequences: Effects on Normal Development Profile After Concussion, *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinics of North America*, Vol. 22, Issue 4, November 2011, pp. 683-700.

³ The Mayo Clinic defines post-traumatic stress disorder as a mental health condition triggered by witnessing or experiencing a terrifying event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. (See web site: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/basics/definition/con-20022540>)

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Dazed by brain injury claims? (continued)

- ⁴ Finkelhor, David, Early and long-term effects of child sexual abuse: An update., *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, Vol 21(5), Oct 1990, pp. 325-330; Yule, William, et. al., The Long-term Psychological Effects of a Disaster Experienced in Adolescence: I: The Incidence and Course of PTSD, *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol., Issue 4, pp. 503-511, May 2000; Udwin, Orlee, et. al., Risk Factors for Long-term Psychological Effects of a Disaster Experienced in Adolescence: Predictors of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 41, Issue 8, pp. 969-979, November 2000; Chin-Hung Chena, et al., Long-term psychological outcome of 1999 Taiwan earthquake survivors: a survey of a high-risk sample with property damage, *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, Vol. 48, Issue 3, May-June 2007, pp. 269-275.
- ⁵ Walter M. High, Jr., adjunct associate professor in Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Neurosurgery and Psychology and researchers in Department of Psychology worked with veterans and conducted a series of neuropsychological tests to measure cognitive function. (See web site: <http://www.newswise.com/articles/uk-researchers-point-to-impact-of-combined-brain-injury-and-ptsd-in-war-veterans>)

Veterans who suffer from both mTBI and PTSD have more significant cognitive and psychological deficits than veterans diagnosed with only one of the conditions.

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