

CENTRAL ILLINOIS NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Children and adolescents lead active lives; sports, running, playing and sometimes they get hurt. Injuries to the developing brain can be long lasting. Prevention of falls, education about safety and close monitoring of play areas is important to prevent serious injuries with lasting effects.

The symptoms of a concussion which is labeled mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) include a syndrome that is named Post Concussive Symptoms (PCS). Those symptoms include but are not limited to fatigue, dizziness, headache, depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, sensitivity to light, forgetfulness and difficulty with concentration and attention. Normally, the symptoms are gone by the first few months after injury. However, mTBI children are at an increased risk for other deficits that are related to school performance and cognition including behavioral problems. Multiple injuries to the same location such as more than one concussion, tends to complicate successful outcomes.

Other factors contribute to a greater risk for PCS and those include; the injury resulting from a motor vehicle related trauma, longer period of post traumatic amnesia, abnormal imaging studies after the mTBI, hospitalization at the time of injury, younger age, family stressors, limited social support, lower intellectual functioning, problems with learning, preinjury behavior and involvement in the legal system. Other contributors include physical discomfort after the injury and difficulty adjusting to the changes as a result of the injury. The experts believe that there are two contributing factors related to PCS and those are not only neurological but psychological factors. It is important to consider the background of the person prior to the injury and the complicating factors when treating the PCS and when considering outcomes.

Our pre existing personality development influences how we respond to a mTBI and resulting PCS. Researchers have learned that people who have a difficult time with PCS endorsed higher content items on psychological testing related to depression, depending upon others for internal satisfaction, negative attitudes, worry and anxiety, consistently low levels of depression, increase in physical symptoms under stress and tendencies to avoid social interactions. The experiences that a person has after a mTBI are influenced by conditions that were present prior to the concussion.

Treatment for mTBI includes a medical evaluation at the time of the injury, follow up with medical personnel and behavioral health care including an interview with a professional that has training and experience in TBI with the possibility of neuropsychological testing. Interventions to decrease discomfort and increase productivity are tailored to the symptoms and are given at the time of the evaluation.

The previous information was obtained from the professional journal from Division 40 of the American Psychological Association, Neuropsychology, Volume 24, Number 2 authors Taylor, et al and Garden et

al. March 2010. For more information about PCS and mTBI you may contact Dr. Beverly Matthews at 217-876-7929 or 217-825-9010.