



International Hyperbaric Medical Foundation

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Study Finds a Biological Repair for a Quiet Epidemic – Brain Injuries

(Lorton, VA) – Brain injuries are the single most expensive chronic disease in public health, according to the Centers for Disease Control and the Association of Schools of Public Health. Now a nonprofit foundation seeks 1,000 volunteers for a study on a new use for an old therapy to regenerate brain tissue biologically instead of simply treating the symptoms with drugs.

Doctors began using hyperbaric oxygen therapy – saturating patients with pure oxygen in a chamber – to treat divers with “the bends,” or decompression sickness, eight decades ago. The federal Food and Drug Administration has already approved it for treating 13 other conditions, including wounds that don’t heal such as diabetic foot wounds or lesions from radiation therapy. It is the only biological repair and regeneration therapy, except for hormones, approved by the FDA.

Doctors have already made progress using the therapy on brain injuries. Dr. Paul Harch, president of the International Hyperbaric Medical Foundation, sponsor of the new study, is presenting 15 cases of veterans whose brains have been injured by blasts and who were treated with oxygen therapy to the Eighth World Congress of the International Brain Injury Association, which meets in Washington, D.C., today.

His study shows, on average, a 15-point increase in IQ in little more than a month, 51% reduction in depression, four times (40%) the clinically significant improvement level for post-concussion symptoms such as headaches and sleep disturbances, and 30% improvements in post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. Results were highly statistically significant. Most have been able to return to duty, work or school. You can see the abstract of his study at:

https://ibia.conference-services.net/programme.asp?conferenceID=1677&action=prog_list&session=6765

Researchers have long understood that brain injuries from blows, accidents, high fevers and the like cost society billions of dollars every year because the millions of people with brain injuries are more likely to be homeless, need other medical care, be unemployed, incarcerated or abuse drugs or alcohol.

“Unidentified traumatic brain injury is an unrecognized major source of social and vocational failure,” Dr. Wayne A. Gordon, director of the Brain Injury Research Center at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, told *The Wall Street Journal* recently. Traumatic brain injury is the signature wound of the Iraq War.

“Failure to effectively treat brain injury can result in life-long cognitive loss,” said Dr. Harch, who was in charge of hyperbaric medicine at Louisiana State University. “Even a single episode of loss of consciousness from trauma has been shown to cause permanent injury to the brain. That is why this study is so important.”

A new nationwide study is being launched on March 15, 2010, across the nation. Dr. Harch's treatment will be available from more than 20 doctors, including Dr. James Wright, a retired Air Force colonel who has replicated Dr. Harch's results with oxygen therapy on other blast-injured war veterans. Dr. Wright was in charge of the Air Force Aerospace & Hyperbaric Medicine Fellowship, teaching military doctors how to use hyperbaric medicine. He was in charge of hyperbaric and aerospace medical research for the Air Force for several years.

The Foundation seeks people with mild to moderate traumatic brain injury, or TBI, and also post-traumatic stress disorder, to participate in this large multi-center study. Participation involves being treated in a chamber 80 times over five months to learn if patients recover cognitive abilities. The treatment is non-invasive and has few side effects.

People can call 800-288-9328, go to www.ClinicalTrials.gov or visit the Foundation's Web site at <http://hyperbaricmedicalfoundation.org> to learn if they are eligible to participate and find participating physicians.