

Brain trauma in children linked to increased risk for ADHD

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Traumatic brain injury sends over 1 million kids, young adults to hospital annually



Singapore – Severe traumatic brain injury in children was associated with increased risk for later onset of attention-deficit/hyperactivity (ADHD) up to about seven years after injury, according to a study in JAMA Pediatrics.

Researchers at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center said the observational study used an analysis of information for 187 children ages 3 to 7 hospitalized overnight for traumatic brain injury or orthopaedic injury at four Ohio hospitals from 2003 to 2008. Forty-eight (25.7 percent) of the children met the definition of secondary ADHD with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury being associated with increased risk.

The information is based on assessments completed by parents up to about seven years following initial injury.

"The findings from this study have important clinical implications and support the need for post-injury monitoring for attention problems and planning clinical follow-up children with traumatic brain injury," said Brad Kurowski, MD, study co-investigator in the Division of Rehabilitation Medicine at Cincinnati Children's.

Study authors report injury and environmental factors were associated with the risk of secondary ADHD. They point to lower levels of maternal education as being significantly associated with this risk. Family dysfunction also was significantly associated with increased risk in patients with TBI, but not in children admitted overnight for orthopaedic injuries.