

MARCH IS BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Falls Account for Over 40 % of Traumatic Brain Injuries

Every 13 Seconds, Someone in the U.S. Sustains a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Brain injury refers to the occurrence of an injury to the brain which results in damage. There are several different types of brain injuries, which fall under the categories of either Traumatic Brain Injury or Acquired Brain Injury. This article will discuss these different types and subsequent treatments.

01 | Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)

A traumatic brain injury is defined as a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts brain function. Traumatic brain injuries can result in short or long-term problems and include the following:

- **Diffuse Axonal Injury** – caused by shaking or strong rotation of the head
- **Concussion** – caused by direct blows to the head
- **Coup-Contre Coup Injury** – contusion on both sides of the head where the brain slams into the opposite side of the skull
- **Penetrating Injuries** – caused by the impact of a sharp object forcing hair, skin, bone and fragments into the brain
- **Locked In Syndrome** – a rare neurological condition in which a person cannot physically move any part of the body except the eyes

02 | Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI)

Acquired brain injuries are defined as brain damage caused by events after birth, and not part of a genetic or congenital disorder; examples include:

- Electric shock
- Infectious disease
- Oxygen deprivation
- Seizure disorders
- Stroke
- Substance abuse
- Toxic exposure
- Tumor

03 | Treatment Options

With regard to ABI, most studies suggest that once brain cells are destroyed or damaged, they do not regenerate. However, other areas of the brain compensate for the injured tissue, so recovery is possible. Rehabilitation begins during the acute treatment phase. As the patient's condition improves, rehabilitation will become more intense. The goal of treatment is to help the patient return to the highest level of function and independence possible.

TBI treatment varies depending on the type of injury sustained. The primary levels of treatment include:

- **Initial treatment** – stabilize the patient
- **Surgical treatment** – minimize bleeding, swelling and pressure to the brain
- **Rehabilitative treatment** – restore the patient's function

04 | Recovery

Recovery varies based on the individual and the severity of the injury sustained. Immediate treatment and rehabilitation are critical to a good outcome. It is equally important that the patient has a good support system in place.

For more information on Brain Injury Awareness, please visit: <http://www.biausa.org/brain-injury-awareness-month.htm>

Did You Know?

Each year, 1.7 million traumatic brain injuries occur in the U.S.

References

<http://www.biausa.org/about-brain-injury.htm>

<http://www.brainline.org/index.html>