

Letter to the Editors

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In our study of long-term survival after traumatic brain injury [1], we reported a small but statistically significant increased risk of 10-year mortality after mild traumatic brain injury in the population of Olmsted County, MN over the period from 1985 through 1999. This significance was lost when the analysis was limited to people who survived mild TBI greater than 6 months, indicating that this risk was primarily present during the period between injury and 6 months.

To determine the cause in the 15 cases of death within 6 months of injury, each of their community-linked medical records (including medical history, death certificates and autopsy reports when available) were independently reviewed by two of the study authors: a board-certified psychiatrist (AB) and a board-certified rehabilitation neuropsychologist (JM). There was 100% agreement between these 2 investigators that in no case was the cause of death either primarily or indirectly related to the head trauma. Though the association of mild injury with increased mortality from

all causes in the short term remains worth noting, this review did not reveal any causal pattern of death other than that it was not related to the initial head trauma. A more complete analysis of this cohort, or expanding the cohort to include larger numbers of cases, may shed more light on the relationship between mild traumatic brain injury and mortality.

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Reference

- [1] Brown AW, Leibson CL, Malec JF, Perkins PK, Diehl NN, Larson DR. Long-term survival after traumatic brain injury: a population-based analysis, *NeuroRehabilitation*. **19** (2004), 37–43.