

# US Soldiers with TBI and PTSD to be evaluated with HBOT

May 9th, 2010

## Study to look at ways to treat TBI

**March 17, 2010** - Jeff Stoffer the American Legion

Dr. Paul Harch, a Louisiana State University researcher who is leading a study on use of hyperbaric oxygen treatment for traumatic brain injury. On March 15, Jacob Gadd, assistant director for Program Management in The American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division, participated in a conference call on hyperbaric oxygen treatment of traumatic brain injury. The International Hyperbaric Medical Foundation conducted the conference calls with Dr. Paul Harch, a Louisiana State University researcher leading the study, and Dr. James Wright, a retired Air Force colonel in charge of research on hyperbarics for the Air Force. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are often referred to as the “signature wounds” of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Doctors used hyperbaric oxygen treatment decades ago mainly for treatment of divers. However, Harch’s recent study of 15 cases of veterans afflicted with blast injuries found, “a 15-point increase in IQ in little more than a month, 51 percent reduction in depression, 40 percent clinically significant improvement levels of post-concussion symptoms such as headaches and sleep disturbances, and a 30 percent improvement in PTSD. The Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis also conducted a relative study, Hyperbaric Oxygen Shows Potential Benefit for Patients with Traumatic Brain Injury, in January. The study found a significant benefit from hyperbaric oxygen treatment to improve brain metabolism and its ability to recover from injury. The findings were recently published in the Journal of Neurosurgery. Additionally, the study showed that cells need oxygen to fuel metabolism for cellular growth and repair. After a traumatic brain injury, there’s a direct correlation between clinical outcome and the degree to which a brain’s metabolism is restored. Dr. Gaylan Rockswold, who conducted the study stated, “in previous research we learned that the brain’s energy is improved and maintained with hyperbaric oxygen treatment, but this study confirms that hyperbaric oxygen treatment has a major impact in terms of increased energy production.” The International Hyperbaric Medical Foundation launched their new nationwide study this week at 15 sites within Florida, California, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Virginia, Maryland, Washington and South Carolina. They are asking for 1,000 individuals to participate in the study. The American Legion does not have an official position on hyperbaric oxygen treatment for treatment of TBI and PTSD at this time. However, the Legion will continue to monitor the research and study by Harch’s team and continue to urge VA and DoD to fully explore options for research and treatment for the signature wounds of Iraq and Afghanistan.