Parent-Reported Mild Head Injury History in Children: Long-Term Effects on Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

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Abstract

Objective.
Consequences of mild head injury for behavioral adjustment have not been well researched, and little is known about the long-term effects of mild head injury for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Methods.
In this longitudinal study of 418 children in Jintan City, China, parents reported children's history of head injury at age 6 years, and the Child Behavior Checklist was used to measure child DSM-IV-oriented ADHD at ages 6 (Wave I) and 12 years (Wave II). Regression models were used to calculate the long-term (Wave II) effect of mild head injury on diagnosed ADHD, while controlling for diagnosed ADHD in Wave I.

Results.
Fifty-seven children (13.6%) had a single injury and 42 (10.0%) had multiple injuries before the age of 6 years. The long-term effect of multiple mild injury on ADHD at age 12 years was significant (R² = 0.103, P < .05), even after controlling for ADHD at age 6 years.

Conclusions.
Multiple, but not single, mild head injuries before the age of 6 years had a significant long-term effect on ADHD. Thus, injuries traditionally overlooked and underreported still pose significant risks to children's long-term behavioral development.