Understanding Health Disparities in Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) & Concussion

Health Disparities Include

Having a Higher Chance of Sustaining a TBI

Older Adults

People aged 75 years and older have the highest numbers and rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and deaths. Most TBI-related hospitalizations in older adults are due to falls.

ADULTS AGED 75 YEARS AND OLDER ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT

of all TBI-related hospitalizations — *of all TBI-related deaths*

Males

The rate of TBI-related hospitalizations in males is

2 times as high as in females

The rate of TBI-related deaths in males is

3 times as high as in females

Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

Survivors of intimate partner violence who have a TBI due to an assault are more likely to experience

PTSD · *Insomnia* · *Depression* · *Worse overall health*

Tribal Populations

American Indian/Alaska Native children and adults have higher rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and deaths than other racial or ethnic groups. Factors that may contribute to this disparity include difficulties accessing appropriate healthcare as well as higher rates of

Motor vehicle crashes · *Substance use* · *Suicide*

Military Service Members & Veterans

450,000+ U.S. service members were diagnosed with a TBI from 2000 to 2021.

The military conflicts from 2005 to 2018 increased the number of service members and Veterans living with TBI, but approximately 80% of TBIs among military service members occur in non-deployed settings.

People in Correctional or Detention Facilities

Research in the United States and from other countries suggests that

ALMOST HALF of people in correctional or detention facilities such as prisons and jails have a history of TBI

People who Experience Homelessness

Compared to the general population, people who experience homelessness are

2 to 4 times more likely to have a history of any type of TBI

10 times more likely to have a history of a moderate or severe TBI

Health Disparities Include

Less Access to TBI Care and Poorer Health Outcomes

Racial & Ethnic Minority Groups

Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic patients are less likely to receive follow-up care and rehabilitation following a TBI compared to non-Hispanic White patients. Racial and ethnic minorities are also more likely to have poor psychosocial, functional, and employment-related outcomes after sustaining a TBI than non-Hispanic White individuals.

People with Lower Incomes or Who Are Uninsured

Compared with patients who have private health insurance, those who are uninsured are less likely to receive a TBI procedure and inpatient services and more likely to die in the hospital following a TBI.

People in Rural Areas

People living in rural areas have a greater risk of dying from a TBI compared to people living in urban areas. Some potential reasons for this disparity include: more time needed to travel to emergency medical care, less access to a Level I trauma center (the highest level of medical care), and difficulty getting services, such as specialized TBI care.

CDC is Actively Working to Reduce Health Disparities that Increase the Risk for TBI

CDC has research underway to better understand and inform the development of programs to **reduce health disparities** that increase the risk for TBI and other injuries.

CDC Supports TBI Prevention by:

- Developing a National Concussion Surveillance System for nationally representative estimates of TBI in children and adults.
- Creating research-based tools designed to better identify survivors of intimate partner violence and individuals at risk for suicide.
- Using virtual TBI training programs to educate and provide support to healthcare providers and school professionals in rural areas.
- Conducting initiatives in education, training, and research to support concussion safety and prevention.
- Releasing clinical guidelines for healthcare providers that can improve TBI care for all Americans.
- Developing the Roadway to Safer Tribal Communities Toolkit.

What You Can do to Prevent TBI

Drive Safely and Responsibly

- Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle.
- Always buckle children in age- and size-appropriate car seats, booster seats, and seat belts.
- Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Make Living And Play Areas Safer For Children

- Install window guards to keep young children from falling out of open windows.
- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs when young children are around.
- Make sure your child's playground has soft material under it, such as mulch or sand.

Wear a helmet *or appropriate headgear*

When you or your children:

- Ride a bike, motorcycle, snowmobile, scooter, or use an all-terrain vehicle.
- Play a contact sport, such as

Football · *Ice hockey* · *Boxing*

- Use in-line skates or ride a skateboard.
- Bat and run bases in baseball or softball.
- Ride a horse.
- Ski or snowboard.

Prevent Older Adult Falls

- Talk to your doctor to evaluate your risk for falling, and talk with them about specific things you can do to reduce your risk for a fall.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines to see if any might make you dizzy or sleepy. This should include prescription medicines, over-the counter medicines, herbal supplements, and vitamins.
- Have your eyes checked at least once a year, and be sure to update your eyeglasses if needed.
- Do strength and balance exercises to make your legs stronger and improve your balance.

The **Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA)** and the **U.S. Brain Injury Alliance** have many state and local chapters and support groups across the country that provide help in your community. You can reach them at

biausa.org

AND

usbia.org