



## **Traumatic Brain Injuries: Current NINDS Research Projects**

by *Traumatic Brain Injury Attorneys* on 01/13/11

The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) is a component of the National Institutes of Health overseen by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). A key mission assigned to NINDS is to conduct research designed to improve the quality of life of those afflicted with various neurological disorders, including traumatic brain injuries (TBIs).

The following descriptions of NINDS' research studies can be best understood by remembering that people's brains are composed of billions of cells that regularly connect and communicate with one another. Furthermore, according to the NINDS Web site, "The neuron is the main functional cell of the brain and nervous system, consisting of a cell body (soma), a tail or long nerve fiber (axon) and projections of the cell body called dendrites." The axons are designed to travel "in tracts or clusters throughout the brain," promoting beneficial connections between various brain areas. Specific Projects Currently Being Run:

- One research project is looking at how calcium ion influx into one of the brain's damaged neurons causes cell death and swelling of brain tissue. Prior studies have shown that this problem can sometimes be alleviated by introducing specialized chemicals;
- Another study is looking at the brain's plasticity after being injured. Plasticity is a trait involving the brain's ability to try and repair itself and take over the functioning of its disabled parts. Researchers are always searching for new ways to help the brain repair itself;

- Others researchers keep trying to devise more competent ways to design rehabilitation programs for TBI patients;
- One current study is trying to find new ways to immediately treat TBI patients after they suffer their injuries in hopes of minimizing any long-term deficits;
- Additional research is being run to determine if there are new ways to use hypothermia (keeping the injured patient's body at a low temperature) when treating children with severe TBIs;
- Another study is looking at ways to use magnesium sulfate to protect nerve cells following a **TBI injury**; and
- Research is also being conducted on how a **TBI patient's** brain might be affected by lowering its intracranial pressure and increasing its overall blood flow.

Those interested in taking part in some of the NINDS clinical research trials in the United States or Canada may want to visit the following link:

[http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/clinicaltrials\\_us.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/clinicaltrials_us.htm)

(This regularly updated Web page lets you choose the neurological disorder that interests you the most.)

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