

HELPS[©]

A brief screening device for TBI

- H** = Did you ever *hit* your head?
Were you ever *hit* on the head?
- E** = Were you ever seen in an *emergency room* by a doctor or hospitalized? For what reason?
- L** = Did you ever *lose consciousness*?
For how long? For what reason?
- P** = Did you have any *problems* after you were hit on the head?
- headaches
 - dizziness
 - anxiety
 - depression
 - difficulty concentrating
 - difficulty remembering
 - difficulty reading, writing, calculating
 - difficulty performing your old job or schoolwork
 - poor judgement (firings, arrests, fights)
 - poor problem solving
 - change in relationship with others
- S** = Any other significant sickness?
- look for hospitalization for brain cancer, meningitis, stroke, heart attack, diabetes
 - also screen for domestic violence and child abuse**

DIRECTIONS

HELPS is a brief screening device for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). This tool is designed to be used by professionals whose primary field of practice is other than TBI. Close to 1,500,000 brain injuries occur in the US each year or one injury every 21 seconds.

Read the questions in order. Score 1 point for every question answered "Yes." A score of 2 or more, particularly if the injury affects function (P), should be considered as a sign of possible injury and needs to be further explored with a more extensive interview and medical work-up.

H = Injuries are caused by motor vehicle crashes, falls, assaults, violent shaking, whiplash or any other outside blow to the head.

E = Many people are seen for treatment. In addition, however, there are those who are taken home by family or friends following a brief period of observation, those who cannot afford treatment and who do not think they require medical attention.

L = While significant in helping to determine the extent of injury, many people with minor TBI may not lose consciousness, yet still have difficulties as the result of their injury.

P = Other problems include: visual auditory sensory impairments, paralysis, weakness of any extremity, balance problems, fatigue, apathy, silliness, impulsivity, mood swings, irritability, decreased ability to learn new information or retrieve old information, shift from one topic to another, abstract, set goals or plan tasks, sequence, initiate tasks, monitor own behavior.

S = Screen for domestic violence if you have not already done so, in addition to looking for a history of other illness.

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