Soldiers who receive traumatic brain injuries during war may be at a higher risk of epilepsy even decades after the brain injury occurred. The new research is published in the July 20, 2010, print issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

"Given the better chances of survival in soldiers fighting in conflicts today, our research suggests that all veterans with a traumatic brain injury should be routinely screened for post-traumatic epilepsy, even decades after the injury," said study author Jordan Grafman, PhD, of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke in Bethesda, Md.

Post-traumatic epilepsy is the most common cause of new-onset epilepsy in young adults, with nearly 30,000 new cases per year in the United States.

For the study, researchers asked 199 veterans who experienced a brain injury 35 years prior whether they ever had a seizure. They were also given intelligence tests. The group underwent scans to detect brain lesions.

Of the 199 people, about 44 percent developed post-traumatic epilepsy.

"For a surprising 13 percent, the post-traumatic epilepsy didn't show up until more than 14 years after the brain injury," said Grafman. "This research strongly suggests that veterans with brain injury will require
long-term neurology care."

The study also found that the type of seizure changed over time, often becoming more severe (or causing loss of consciousness).

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

Citation: Soldiers with brain injuries at higher risk of epilepsy decades later (2010, July 19) retrieved 8 October 2023 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-07-soldiers-brain-injuries-higher-epilepsy.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.