

# Parents cautioned over 'common' brain injury

April 27 2012

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A newly developed paediatric concussion kit will help parents identify crucial signs of traumatic brain injury (TBI), one of the leading causes of acquired disability and death in children.

The kit, developed by Dr Audrey McKinlay from Monash University after examining long-term issues of TBI sustained during childhood, contains a step-by-step guide for treating injuries, therapies, vital contacts and other information.

Before relocating from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand last year, the award-winning [clinical psychologist](#) distributed the kits to all GPs in Christchurch to assist with recovery of the devastating 2011 [earthquake](#).

It is hoped that similar [concussion](#) kits will be made available to parents, schools and [health professionals](#) in Australia in the near future.

Dr McKinlay said the kit helped parents understand what symptoms may follow even after a mild brain injury and what to do once they occur.

“In our research, we could detect psychiatric problems including ADHD among teens who had sustained a childhood brain injury,” Dr McKinlay said.

“There are misconceptions around levels of brain injury and the meaning of recovery, particularly the use of the term concussion as a mild injury, which research states is not the case.

“Every injury to the head should be taken seriously. Too often children are returned to school without support following a TBI and symptoms such as fatigue or behavioural issues develop.”

Accidental falls, motor vehicle collisions and child abuse are common causes of TBI.

Dr McKinlay from the School of Psychology and Psychiatry is a driving force in the establishment of a concussion clinic at Monash University’s Notting Hill Clinical Psychology Centre.

Late last year, she was awarded the prestigious Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Early Career Research Award (DECRA) for her project ‘Early identification of young people at risk of offending

behaviour and mental health issues following [traumatic brain injury](#)'.  
Last month she received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Research (Early Career).

Provided by Monash University

Citation: Parents cautioned over 'common' brain injury (2012, April 27) retrieved 6 May 2024  
from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-04-parents-cautioned-common-brain-injury.html>

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