

## **\*Traumatic Brain Injury Fact Sheet**

### **What is Traumatic Brain Injury?**

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is caused by a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI. The severity of a TBI may range from "mild," i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness, to "severe," i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury.

### **What is PTSD?**

Post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder that develops after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened.

### **Military statistics**

- Almost 60 percent of the soldiers exposed to a blast during their tour of duty who were later examined at Walter Reed Medical Center between January 2003 and February 2005 had sustained a traumatic brain injury.<sup>2</sup>
- About 10 percent of combat troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and 20 percent of soldiers in front-line infantry units suffered concussions during their tours. This could mean 150,000 Americans who served or are currently serving may have a brain injury.<sup>3, 4</sup>
- During the Vietnam War, 12 to 14 percent of all combat casualties had a brain injury, and the mortality rate of U.S. soldiers who died from a brain injury was 75 percent.<sup>2</sup>
- About 19 percent of Vietnam veterans suffered from PTSD at some point after the war.<sup>1</sup>

### **References**

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3. Sowrey, Melissa. 2007. Brain injuries overlooked at some veterans hospitals. ABC News, February 27. <http://www.abcnews.go.com/wnt/woodruffreports/story?id=2908676&page=1>
4. Zoroya, Gregg. 2006. Pentagon holds brain injury data. *USA Today*, June 18. [http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2006-06-07-brain-injuries\\_x.htm?POE=click-refer](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2006-06-07-brain-injuries_x.htm?POE=click-refer).