

What If Your MRI Is "Clean" Post-Brain Injury?

Source: Produced by Victoria Tilney McDonough and Brian King

Video Link: <http://www.brainline.org/content/multimedia.php?id=3207>

Dr. Deborah Little: So one of the challenges we have in the field is that it's estimated that more than 95 percent of all brain injuries in the U.S. have completely clean or normal CT's and MRI's that are done. This is a big challenge for families when they're looking for an answer because their child is not recovering from a concussion maybe. I mean in the severe injuries we're very good at characterizing damage but those injuries only account for 5 to 10 percent of what we see overall and when we're seeing more than 3 million a year, that's a large denominator to completely miss.

So the role of imaging becomes much more research generated, rather than clinically oriented and we are moving to try and make some of the technologies clinically applicable. So for instance, at pretty much every major medical center in the U.S., we are using diffusion tensor imaging in our standard clinical imaging protocols now so in terms of what do you when your standard MRI's are negative? You keep pushing because if your child is still developing symptoms, we still are not very good at really characterizing the damage that's been done and you can also always for MRI, you can always ask to go see a TBI specialist.

Seeing a family doctor is a great first step but if you're continuing to have symptoms, it's really important to go see somebody who really understands the intricacies of TBI.