



Survival rate of head gunshot wound victims higher than expected

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NEW HAVEN, Conn. (WTNH) – A new study, a first of its kind, shows that civilians who are shot in the head or have other penetrating brain injuries, have a 42 percent chance of surviving.

The senior author of the study, Kevin Sheth, is an Associate Professor of Neurology and Neurosurgery at Yale. The study, published in *Journal Neurology*, includes 400 patients at two major trauma centers.

According to the study better motor control of limbs, pupil response, and lower overall trauma score lead to a higher chance of survival. However self-inflicted wounds had a worse prognosis, and women do better than men. Also those transferred from another hospital had a better survival rate. Sheth says “it’s important for doctors to be aggressive in transferring these patients to higher-level trauma centers.” He also said “The survival rate was much higher than we anticipated and, consistent with other diseases in recent years.”

The study is the result of the 2011 shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona when critical care neurologists and trauma experts realized there was little data on survival rates of non-military victims of gunshot wounds to the head.

The study’s lead author is Susanne Muehlschlegel of the University of Massachusetts and researchers at the University of Maryland Shock and Trauma Center also contributed.