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**A STUDY INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF
TAI CHI CHUAN IN INDIVIDUALS WITH
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.**

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the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in Psychology
at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

CHRISTINE SINA GEMMELL

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Abstract

Tai Chi Chuan (or Tai Chi) is a Chinese Martial Art that has been shown to improve mood, balance, coordination, cardiovascular and respiratory functions, fatigue, general wellbeing, motor skills, and to reduce stress. Research on Tai Chi has mainly been conducted with older adults with little emphasis in other populations. This study explored whether Tai Chi had similar effects on individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Eighteen participants with TBI, (nine females and nine males) either undertook a course in Tai Chi (N=9) or were on a waiting list (Control group, N=9). The Tai Chi group attended twice weekly, for 45 minutes over a 6-week period. Before and after each Tai Chi class the Visual Analogue Mood Scale (VAMS) was completed to determine whether there were any immediate effects on mood. Both groups also completed the Medical Outcome Scale Short Form 36 (SF-36) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (3 weekly) before, during, at the completion of the Tai Chi course, and 3 weeks after the experiment finished. Responses of the Tai Chi group were compared with the control group, to determine whether there were any group differences in physical and emotional functions, self-esteem, social functioning, and general perceptions of health. The results of this study confirm that Tai Chi improves mood in individuals with TBI. Individuals were less tense, afraid, confused, angry and sad, and felt more energetic and happy immediately after Tai Chi practice. No significant differences between groups were found for physical and emotional functioning.

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