

Why does physical damage sometimes increase cognitive abilities?

As it turns out, there are reliable reports in the medical literature of—yes—bullet wounds to the head, stroke, concussion, meningitis, and even the progression of dementia leading to expanded cognitive and artistic skills.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Many forms of brain function impairment associated with seeming unconsciousness are now known to be accompanied by richer inner life. For instance, the dangerous “choking game” played by teenagers worldwide is an attempt to induce rich feelings of self-transcendence through partial strangulation and fainting. The psychotherapeutic technique of holotropic breathwork also uses hyperventilation-induced fainting to achieve what is described as an expansion of awareness. Even pilots undergoing “G-force induced Loss Of Consciousness” (G-LOC)—whereby blood is forced out of the brain—report “memorable dreams.”

Generalized physiological stress caused, for instance, by cardiac arrest—which severely compromises brain function—is sometimes accompanied by reports of “Near Death Experiences” (NDEs). NDEs reportedly entail life-transforming insights, emotions and inner imagery far richer than ordinary experiences, despite overwhelming disruption to the brain's ability to operate.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Transcending the Brain](#)

For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read [GLP on Wikipedia](#)