

Effectiveness of oxygen therapy harder to deny

Veterans searching for TBI and PTSD solutions are finding their way to hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), with or without help from VA or DoD. "More and more veterans are getting treatment in clinics and off-label places," says Paul Harch, director of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine's Hyperbaric Medicine Fellowship Program, which



fights for federal recognition of HBOT treatment for veterans and military personnel. "We can't understand why they won't at least try this when everyone is in agreement that it is safe ... and that there is increasing evidence of its effectiveness. The current

accepted therapy are drugs that have been implicated in the increased suicide epidemic among veterans."

Harch is in the midst of a 50-subject test to bolster the case for HBOT acceptance. VA and DoD argue that the cost of treatment is too high. But Harch says estimates of up to \$500,000 per patient are exaggerated; HBOT runs \$2,000 an hour on average, but therapy can usually be concluded after 40 sessions. Critics have called it a "placebo" even though veterans nationwide are raising funds to get into programs.

"While there is more awareness, access is still minimal, and getting it paid for is still a struggle," Harch says. "But it's getting more difficult to make statements that it doesn't work. There's too much information to the contrary."

The third edition of Harch's book "The Oxygen Revolution" was published in April.