Objective: Mood disturbance post-TBI and its recovery are poorly understood. Using the 3-factor structure of the RPCSQ (anxiety, depression, psychomotor) identified by the authors, the study’s aims were to chart mood change in the first year post-TBI, and to examine mood relationships with demographic and clinical variables in order to predict symptom recovery.

Method: Population sample of 430 individuals presenting with TBI at the Department of Emergency Medicine, Royal Hobart Hospital, participated. Data were collected on the HADS within 1 week of TBI, and at 14 days, 28 days, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months post-injury. ANOVAs were conducted on HADS factor scores, and Multiple Regression (MR) was used to predict mood factor outcomes at 6 and 12 months using initial clinical variables (including HADS factor scores, Post-Traumatic Amnesia (PTA)) and demographic variables (age, sex).

Results: Participants with longer PTAs reported more symptoms on the factors, as did women and individuals aged 41-60 years. MR analyses indicated that each initial factor score was the best predictor of itself at 6 and 12 months post-TBI, with age, PTA, and sex also contributing significantly (range of Rs = 0.5 to 0.72). Prediction of anxiety factor score was the most accurate.

Discussion: Whilst the results for sex and PTA were predicted, the finding of more symptoms in middle-aged participants was surprising (perhaps reflecting the combining effects of other life stresses). Using MR analyses with scores on simple variables obtained immediately following TBI should help clinicians to predict mood outcome for individual patients, and should assist in planning and evaluating treatment interventions post-TBI.