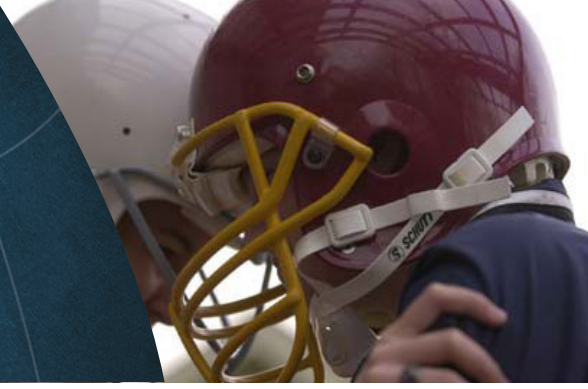


Return-to-Play After Concussions



An unacceptable number of adolescent athletes are returning to play before fully recovering from concussion. These athletes are at risk of negative outcomes including serious lifelong physical and mental health problems or even death. Given the potentially catastrophic consequences of returning to play before being fully recovered following concussion, there is need to improve education on appropriate return-to-play guidelines and to find ways to ensure these guidelines are being applied. Sports medicine professionals, parents, coaches and sports administrators must work together to ensure proper recovery following concussion.

Research Scope

The National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study has collected sports injury data from a nationally representative sample of 100 U.S. high schools since its inception during the 2005-06 school year. Previous published findings from this surveillance study indicated that sports-related concussions accounted for almost 10 percent of all injuries among student athletes. Led by Dr. Dawn Comstock, a study by researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital analyzed data from this surveillance study to determine whether concussed student athletes are complying with recommended return-to-play guidelines.

Yard EE, and Comstock RD. Compliance With Return to Play Guidelines Following Concussion in US High School Athletes, 2005-2008. *Brain Inj.* 2009;23(11):888-898.

Research Findings

- Under American Academy of Neurology return-to-play guidelines, 40.5 percent of concussed high school athletes returned to play too soon.
- Under Prague return-to-play guidelines, 15 percent of concussed high school athletes returned to play too soon.
- In gender-comparable sports, males were more likely than females to be noncompliant with Prague return-to-play guidelines.
- During the 2007-2008 season alone, 15.8 percent of football players who sustained a concussion and lost consciousness returned to play the same day.

For more information on traumatic brain injuries, including concussions, or for a free (Heads Up!) tool kit on concussions, visit www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm.