

Experts: HS football concussions merit more study

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(AP) -- Some studies suggest that head injuries can set up professional football players for later mental problems. Now congressmen and experts want to know more about injuries to high school players.

NFL concussions were the focus of a hearing in Washington this week. Some experts estimate as many as 1 in 10 high school football players get a concussion every year, but little is known about the long-term medical risks.

Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., said at the hearing that he would seek information on high school and college players.

Studies of retired professional players have raised concerns that their head injuries can later lead to Alzheimer's disease and other [memory problems](#). One study of retired players, published in 2005, found that having three or more concussions was associated with a higher risk of mild [cognitive impairment](#) after age 50.

Kevin Guskiewicz of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill suggested the same might hold true for high school players, but stressed there is no evidence for that.

Dr. Anthony Alessi, who co-chairs the American Academy of Neurology's sports neurology section, recommends that coaches limit the number of practices in which players slam into each other at full speed. He said that would reduce the risk of concussion.

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