

Risk factors identified for prolonged sports concussion symptoms

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Researchers have found clear, identifiable factors that signal whether an athlete will experience concussive symptoms beyond one week. The researchers sought to identify risk factors for prolonged concussion symptoms by examining a large national database of high school athletes' injuries. Previous concussion studies were limited in scope, focusing only on male football players. The information from this study applies to male and female athletes from a number of different sports.

Provided by University of Washington

Researchers found that athletes who have four or more symptoms at initial injury were more likely to have persistent concussive symptoms. Drowsiness, concentration difficulties, nausea and sensitivity to light and noise were also associated with longer-lasting concussive symptoms. Because concussions tend to be a common occurrence in football, researchers compared data from football players to other sports, and found that risk factors were different for football and non-football-related concussion.

The results of this study could change how long high [school athletes](#) are kept from returning to play after a concussion. Previously, athletes who lost consciousness were held out from playing longer than those who did not lose consciousness, but the study found little correlation between [loss of consciousness](#) and [persistent symptoms](#).

Dr. Sara P. D. Chrisman, an [adolescent medicine](#) fellow in the University of Washington Department of Pediatrics, headed the study. She said, "The medical community is becoming more aware that concussions may not be a minor injury and may result in prolonged symptoms. This is a step towards developing evidence-based return to play guidelines."

More information: The study was carried out with the help of the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center and published by *Brain Injury*.

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