

Children, youth take longer to fully recover from concussion

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York University concussion experts report that children and youth take longer to fully recover from a concussion than previously thought.

After a concussion, [young athletes](#) usually rejoin their teams in a few weeks if they do not have any active symptoms. However, it might take up to two years to fully recover from the injury before they can play as skillfully as their teammates with no history of concussion, according Professor Lauren Sergio in the Faculty of Health.

"Performing [motor tasks](#), guided by what we see, is crucial in skill-based activities such as sports," says Sergio. "But the current return to sport assessment doesn't test to see if the injured person has regained this ability. Because of this often children and youth who have had a concussion end up returning to normal activities before they are fully recovered. We believe this makes them more vulnerable to another concussion."

The findings indicate that those in the age group of eight and 16 are not only vulnerable to concussions, but because their brain is still developing, they are neurologically more fragile than adults for performing tasks that require cognitive motor integration following a concussion.

The latest research at Sergio's lab studied the prolonged difficulty in cognitive-motor integration in 50 children and adolescents with a history of concussion. Their performance was compared with 49 who have never had a concussion.

Participants in both the groups were asked to perform two different tasks on a dual-touchscreen laptop. In one task target location and motor action were aligned. In the other task that tested cognitive-motor integration, the required movement was not aligned with the guiding visual target and required simultaneous thinking for successful performance.

"We noticed significant difficulty in completing the tasks among those with concussion history," says Marc Dalecki, postdoctoral candidate and lead author. "In fact, it took many of the children two years after the concussion to have a similar performance on the task as [children](#) who did not have a [history of concussion](#)."

More information: Marc Dalecki et al, [Prolonged cognitive-motor impairments in children and adolescents with a history of concussion](#), *Concussion* (2016). DOI: [10.2217/cnc-2016-0001](#)

Provided by York University

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