

Expanding sports concussion laws may help ensure safety of all teenage athletes

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Recent concussion laws that set out to prevent head injuries in American teenage athletes should be extended to include the activities of summer camps, travel teams and all-star teams. This will ensure that all children and youths who suffer head injuries receive appropriate care and education. So says Thomas Trojian of Drexel University College of Medicine, lead author of a study that showed a marked increase in the number of teenagers receiving medical treatment for sports-related concussions after laws pertaining to these injuries were passed in Connecticut in 2010. The findings are published in Springer's journal *Injury Epidemiology*.

The number of sports-related concussions being treated in emergency departments among American high school athletes has increased over the past decade. This is, among other reasons, because of a greater awareness that athletes with related symptoms should receive appropriate treatment. Since 2014 it has become mandatory nationwide for athletes between the ages of 14 and 18 years to be removed from play when a concussion is suspected. In such cases an athlete must also be further evaluated by a licensed medical professional.

Connecticut was one of the first states to set laws in place to ensure the safety and the appropriate management of sports-related concussions among American high [school students](#). Dr. Trojian and his team's study is among the first to investigate whether such a state law has had an effect on the medical system. They analyzed the emergency room records of two major trauma centres in Connecticut. A marked increase

in the frequency of [high school](#) students being treated for sports-related concussions was found. This went up from 2.5 visits per month prior to the law being passed, to almost six per month thereafter. This suggests that the state's sports-related concussion law has helped to improve the evaluation and detection of such injuries among [high school students](#), by increasing obligatory emergency room visits.

"Concussion laws mandating the removal of athletes with a head injury from play might be expanded to include all organized sports, at all levels," advises Trojian. Pina Violano, RN, PhD (c) of Yale-New Haven Hospital, co-author on the paper, says "Changes to state [concussion](#) laws could include summer camps, travel teams and all-star teams, to ensure that all children with sports-related concussions are getting appropriate care and education."

More information: Trojian, T. et al (2015). The Effects of a State Concussion Law on the Frequency of Sport-Related Concussions as Seen in Two Emergency Departments, *Injury Epidemiology* .
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