

Rural versus urban causes of childhood concussion

March 31 2014

Researchers at Western University (London, Canada) have found youth living in rural areas are more likely to sustain concussions from injuries involving motorized vehicles such as all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes, whereas youth living in urban areas suffer concussions mostly as a result of sports. Hockey accounts for 40 per cent of those injuries. The study which reveals where and how children are receiving concussions is published in the *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery*.

Dr. Doug Fraser, a scientist with the Children's Health Research Institute at Lawson Health Research Institute and Tanya Charyk Stewart, the Injury Epidemiologist for the Trauma Program at Children's Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) and their team tracked all the youth under the age of 18 who presented to the LHSC emergency departments with a [concussion](#) over a six year period. There were 2,112 paediatric concussions, with a steady increase in number treated each year.

"It was important for us to learn about who is getting injured, where they're getting injured, and why they're getting injured. Once you answer those questions, then you can implement targeted [injury](#) prevention programs," says Dr. Fraser, an associate professor in the Departments of Paediatrics, Physiology & Pharmacology and Clinical Neurological Sciences at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Concussions are a particular concern for children and adolescents because their brains are still developing and they are more susceptible to

effects of a head injury. The goal following this research is to create injury prevention programs that target and educate those at high risk of sustaining a concussion.

Concussions can often be predictable. Along with properly following the rules of the sport and wearing the protective equipment, Charyk Stewart suggests, "In sports, if you have been hit, then just get off the field immediately and stop play. If you are experiencing any symptoms, be seen by a doctor."

Dr. Fraser explained what to look for in a child who has experienced a head injury, "Watch the person carefully. In young children look for symptoms like, irritability or an inability to console the child. If the care giver has any concerns at all; if a person has any symptoms whatsoever in conjunction with an injury, they should immediately go and be seen by a doctor. Better safe than sorry, so be seen."

Provided by University of Western Ontario

Citation: Rural versus urban causes of childhood concussion (2014, March 31) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-03-rural-urban-childhood-concussion.html>

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