

Chronic traumatic encephalopathy in 25-year-old former football player

January 4 2016

Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) is a neurodegenerative disorder associated with repetitive head impacts and can be diagnosed only by autopsy after death.

In an article published online by *JAMA Neurology*, Ann C. McKee, M.D., and Jesse Mez, M.D., M.S., of the Boston University School of Medicine, and coauthors write an observation letter about CTE pathology in a 25-year-old former [college football player](#) who experienced more than 10 concussions while playing football, the first occurring when he was 8 years old.

The authors note that, to their knowledge, this is the first autopsy-confirmed case to include [neuropsychological testing](#) to document the type of cognitive issues that present with CTE. The young man played football for 16 years, beginning when he was 6 and including three years of Division I college football. During his freshman year of college, he experienced a concussion with momentary loss of consciousness followed by headaches, neck pain and other symptoms that included difficulty with memory and concentration. He stopped playing football in his junior year because of ongoing symptoms, began failing his classes and eventually left school before earning a degree.

The player, who had a family history of addiction and depression, later had difficulty maintaining a job and began using marijuana to help headaches and anxiety and to help him sleep. He died of cardiac arrest that was secondary to *Staphylococcus aureus* endocarditis.

More information: *JAMA Neurol.* Published online January 4, 2016.
[DOI: 10.1001/jamaneurol.2015.3998](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaneurol.2015.3998).

Provided by The JAMA Network Journals

Citation: Chronic traumatic encephalopathy in 25-year-old former football player (2016, January 4) retrieved 17 April 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-01-chronic-traumatic-encephalopathy-year-old-football.html>

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