

# Percent of teens who report having had a concussion in their lifetime

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In a survey that included more than 13,000 adolescents, about 20 percent reported at least one diagnosed concussion during their lifetime, and 5.5 percent reported being diagnosed with more than one concussion,

according to a study published by *JAMA*.

Little is known about the prevalence and factors associated with concussions among U.S. adolescents. Providing a national baseline of [concussion](#) prevalence and factors is necessary to target and monitor prevention efforts to reduce these types of injuries during this important developmental period. Phil Veliz, Ph.D., of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and colleagues used data from the 2016 Monitoring the Future (MTF) [survey](#), an annual, in-school survey of U.S. students in grades 8, 10, and 12. The survey included the question, "Have you ever had a head injury that was diagnosed as a concussion?" Sociodemographic variables included sex, race/ethnicity, grade level, and participation in competitive sport within the past 12 months.

Among the 13,088 adolescents who participated in the 2016 MTF survey, 50.2 percent were female, 46.8 percent were white, and the most common age was 16 years. In the survey, 19.5 percent reported at least one diagnosed concussion in their lifetime; 14 percent reported one diagnosed concussion; and 5.5 percent reported being diagnosed with more than one concussion. Several factors were associated with higher lifetime prevalence of reporting a diagnosed concussion: being male, white, in a higher grade, and participating in competitive sports. In particular, participation in contact sports was associated with a higher odds of [lifetime prevalence](#) of being diagnosed with more than one concussion (11.1 percent).

The study notes some limitations, including the self-report measure of concussion; responses may be biased due to respondents misunderstanding the question or providing inaccurate information.

"These findings are consistent with those from emergency department and regional studies that show that participation in sports is one of the leading causes of concussions among adolescents, and that youth

involved in [contact sports](#) are at an increased risk for sustaining concussions," the authors write. "Greater effort to track concussions using large-scale epidemiological data are needed to identify high-risk subpopulations and monitor prevention efforts."

**More information:** *JAMA* (2017). [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2017.9087](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2017.9087)

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