

Does concussion recovery and symptom severity differ between men and women?

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A new study comparing male and female athletes examined whether there are clear sex-related differences in post-concussion symptom severity and length of recovery. In addition to a finding of significant differences between the male and female college varsity athletes, differences among the women depending on hormonal contraceptive use were reported in the study published in *Journal of Neurotrauma*.

"The Effects of Sex Differences and Hormonal Contraception on Outcomes Following Collegiate Sports-Related Concussion" is coauthored by Virginia Gallagher, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern, University (Evanston, IL) and colleagues from Northwestern University and Edward Hines, Jr. Veterans Administration Hospital (IL). The researchers measured peak symptom severity following concussion among the study participants and length of time to recovery, defined as the period of time between the injury and when they were cleared to return to full play. Within the group of female study participants, the researchers compared outcomes among hormonal contraceptive users and non-users.

"This study addresses an area of great contemporary interest and debate, providing evidence for differential concussive outcomes between male and female collegiate athletes," says John Povlishock, Ph.D., Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Neurotrauma*. "Although, as noted by the authors, the study does have several limitations, it provides novel and useful information, particularly regarding the issue of [sex differences](#) in the length of recovery from concussive injury, thereby setting the stage for

its continued investigation."

More information: Virginia Gallagher et al. The Effects of Sex Differences and Hormonal Contraception on Outcomes after Collegiate Sports-Related Concussion, *Journal of Neurotrauma* (2018). [DOI: 10.1089/neu.2017.5453](https://doi.org/10.1089/neu.2017.5453)

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