

# App for mobile phones helps diagnose concussions

June 3 2011, By JOEDY McCREARY , AP Sports Writer

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(AP) -- The next tool in the campaign against concussions might be your smartphone. A doctor at the University of North Carolina teamed with other head-trauma researchers to develop an application for mobile devices that helps determine whether someone may have suffered a concussion.

Jason Mihalik of UNC's brain injury research center joined Justin Smith of Psychological Assessment Resources Inc. and the Children's National Medical Center in developing the program.

Smith says it's the first observer-based [concussion](#) app. After the user answers a series of questions, the app determines the likelihood of a concussion and can email information to a doctor. Mihalik said Thursday that the basis for the app's question flow comes from materials provided by the Centers for Disease Control.

The introduction of the app is just one way to speed the response to possible concussions. One of the key issues discussed during the National Sports Concussion Cooperative's daylong seminar was how to most effectively bridge the communication gap between team doctors and the team athletic trainers, who often are the first to act when players suffer concussion-like symptoms.

"The documentation (of immediate symptoms) is very important, from, 'How did they get hurt?' to the mechanism of injury through those initial signs and symptoms, to 'How did they progress over time?'" said Bill

Griffin of the National Athletic Trainers' Association. "It's not only what happens at the time of the injury, but how things change."

The cooperative consists of coaches, doctors, equipment manufacturers and parents, and the group was formed in March to study concussions and brain [trauma injuries](#) in an attempt to make sports safer.

"We're trying to do more. We think there is an opportunity to do more," said Art Chou, Rawlings' vice president of research and development. "The caution that we have as manufacturers is, are we ready to draw definitive conclusions? ... There's a balance there, and I think it's up to the research community to determine whether it is ready for prime time or not, because the issue is going to be one of public perception.

"The issue is, have we confused the public? ... I would like to see more consensus from the research community that supports that, because we need more data. We need to move the needle. ... The last thing we need, I think now, as a whole football community, is going back and forth and confusing the issue any more."

Mike Oliver, the executive director of the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment, continued to express a longstanding desire to come up with a safety standard for youth helmets.

But he cautioned that it's dangerous to rush to a conclusion before the scientific research is complete. NOCSEA, a nonprofit corporation, formed in 1969 in response to a need for a performance test standard for helmets.

"You want to have an answer. You want to have a solution to the problem," Oliver said. "You want to be able to say ... 'We do have a solution to the problem and you can have a level of confidence (that) you will have a level of protection. ... But we can't do that until we have the

science behind it."

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