

Study finds age doesn't impact concussion symptoms

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Recent scientific findings have raised the fear that young athletes may fare worse after sustaining a sports-related concussion than older athletes.

Researchers in the Vanderbilt Sports Concussion Center compared [symptoms](#) associated with [concussion](#) in middle- and high-school aged [athletes](#) with those in college-age athletes and found no significant differences between the two age groups.

The study, "Does age affect symptom recovery after sports-related concussion? A study of high school and [college athletes](#)," was in the *Journal of Neurosurgery: Pediatrics*.

Lead authors were Vanderbilt University School of Medicine students Young Lee and Mitchell Odom. Other researchers were Scott Zuckerman, M.D., Gary Solomon, Ph.D., and Allen Sills, M.D.

In this retrospective study, the researchers reviewed a database containing information on pre-concussion and post-concussion symptoms in two different age groups: younger (13-16 years old) and older (18-22 years old). Athletes (92 in each group) were evenly matched with respect to gender, number of previous concussions, and time to the first post-concussion test.

Each athlete completed individual pre- and post-concussion questionnaires that covered a variety of symptoms associated with concussion, some of which were headache, nausea, dizziness, fatigue, sleep problems, irritability and difficulties with concentration or memory. Each athlete's post-concussion scores were compared to his or her own individual baseline scores.

The number or severity of symptoms cited at baseline and post-concussion showed no significant difference between the two [age groups](#). Symptoms returned to baseline levels within 30 days after concussion in 95.7 percent of the

younger athletes and in 96.7 percent of the older athletes.

"In the evaluation of sports-related concussion, it is imperative to parse out different ways of assessing outcomes: neurocognitive scores versus symptom endorsement versus balance issues, school performance, etc," Zuckerman said.

"It appears that symptoms may not be a prominent driver when assessing outcomes of younger versus older athletes. We hope that our study can add insight into the evaluation of youth athletes after sports-related concussion."

Provided by Vanderbilt University Medical Center

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