

New research offers insights into football-related concussions

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(HealthDay)—Repeated hits to the head, rather than one severe blow, may determine whether football players suffer a concussion, a new study suggests.

The findings underscore the need to limit head impacts during football practice and games, said study lead author Brian Stemper, of Marquette University and Medical College of Wisconsin.

Stemper's team compared 50 Division 1 [college football players](#) who'd suffered concussions with athletes who played the same position on the same team but did not have a [concussion](#) (the "control" group).

Compared to the [control group](#), 72 percent of the concussed players had more head impacts on the day of their concussion or earlier in the season, the findings showed.

The association between repeated hits to the head and concussion was strongest among players who had more body contact, according to the study.

The results are scheduled for publication in the journal *Annals of Biomedical Engineering*.

This analysis provides further evidence "for the role of repetitive head impact exposure as a predisposing factor for the onset of concussion among Division 1 college football athletes," Stemper said in a journal news release.

However, the study can't prove cause and effect. And Stemper acknowledged a need to confirm the results.

Still, "the clinical implication of these findings supports the contemporary trend of limiting [head](#) impact exposure for college football athletes during practice sessions," he said.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on [concussions](#).

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