

Good sleep quality encourages better recovery after sport-related concussion

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A new study found that young athletes who have good sleep quality after sustaining a concussion are more likely to recover within two weeks. Those who don't have good sleep quality often take longer to recover, sometimes greater than 30 days.

The study abstract, "Association Between Sleep Quality and Recovery Following a Sport-Related Concussion in the Pediatric Population," will be presented at the American Academy of Pediatrics 2018 National Conference & Exhibition, in Orlando, Fla. Researchers at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children examined data from four outpatient clinics in north Texas that specialize in treating concussions, analyzing records from 356 athletes younger than 19 who were diagnosed with a sport-related concussion between October 2015 and June 2017.

Researchers looked at overall [sleep quality](#) for these young athletes by asking them to complete a commonly used sleep questionnaire. Those athletes who reported a score of five or fewer were considered to have good sleep quality and generally had their concussion symptoms resolve within two weeks. Those athletes who reported a score of six or more were considered to have poor sleep quality and experienced symptoms for a longer period of time, often times greater than one month.

"The importance of good sleep quality is often underestimated in young athletes," said Jane S. Chung, MD, FAAP, the primary author of the abstract and a sports medicine physician at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. "Sleep is not only important for physical, mental, and cognitive well-being, but also seems to play a pivotal role in the recovery of the brain following a sport-related concussion."

Survey results showed that 73 percent of athletes had good sleep quality at their initial clinic visit,

while 27 percent exhibited poor sleep quality. Girls were more likely to have poor sleep quality post-concussion than boys. Athletes with poor sleep quality reported two times greater symptom severity at their initial clinic visit and three times greater symptom severity at their 3-month follow-up compared to those with good sleep quality, although both groups improved over time.

The authors hope that this information encourages clinicians to ask about sleep quality post-concussion and use that information to encourage good sleep habits as well as identify athletes that may be at risk for a longer recovery period.

"Pediatricians and health care providers involved in the care of young athletes should educate and emphasize the importance of good sleep quality and sleep hygiene for optimal overall health, performance, and recovery," Dr. Chung said. "Parents can take small steps to help improve their child's sleep quality by establishing a regular sleep schedule, avoiding electronics at least one hour prior to bedtime, and encouraging them to get at least 8-10 hours of sleep each night."

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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