Medical Xpress

# Don't wait to get concussion care; early treatment may mean faster recovery

January 6 2020

Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Early clinical treatment may significantly reduce recovery time following a concussion, according to new research led by the University of Pittsburgh Sports Medicine Concussion Program.

The results, published today in *JAMA Neurology*, suggest delays in seeking treatment can lead to unnecessarily longer recovery.

"Our study emphasizes the importance of seeking appropriate, specialized care early on. Delaying clinical care following a concussion leaves patients to deal with symptoms on their own and negates the positive effects of early and targeted interventions," said senior author Anthony Kontos, Ph.D., research director at Pitt's Sports Medicine Concussion Program.

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury caused by a jolt to the head or body that disrupts the function of the brain. This injury can result in physical, cognitive, emotional and/or sleep-related symptoms that may or may not involve a loss of consciousness. The symptoms can last from several minutes, to days, weeks, months or longer.

Kontos and his team analyzed 162 athletes with diagnosed concussion injuries between the ages of 12 and 22 years. Athletes treated within the first week of injury recovered faster than athletes who did not receive care until eight days to three weeks after injury. Once in care, the length of time spent recovering was the same for athletes evaluated within the first week of injury compared to those evaluated eight days to three weeks post-injury, indicating the days before initial clinical care was the primary driver for the longer recovery duration.

"Early clinical care including behavioral management interventions and targeted exertion, vestibular and oculomotor rehabilitation exercises also may minimize missed time at work, school or sports, helping the patient return to a normal routine sooner," said Michael "Micky" Collins, Ph.D., executive and clinical director, UPMC Sports Medicine Program.

Kontos and his colleagues say future research should look into the biological reasons why earlier engagement with care promotes faster

recovery, as well as explore whether their findings could apply to other types of patients, such as military personnel.

Provided by University of Pittsburgh

Citation: Don't wait to get concussion care; early treatment may mean faster recovery (2020, January 6) retrieved 25 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-01-dont-concussion-early-treatment-faster.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.