



## The Psychological Impact of Sports Concussions on Athletes

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### Description

Sports-related concussions, also known as mild Traumatic Brain Injuries (mTBIs), are a significant public health issue, particularly among young athletes. A concussion occurs when a person experiences a blow or jolt to the head, resulting in the brain moving rapidly back and forth inside the skull. This sudden movement can cause chemical changes in the brain and damage to brain cells, leading to a variety of symptoms.

Concussion symptoms can vary greatly from person to person, but some common signs include headaches, dizziness, confusion, memory loss, and sensitivity to light or noise. In some cases, symptoms can be subtle and may not appear immediately after the injury, making it difficult to diagnose a concussion. Furthermore, some athletes may try to hide their symptoms to avoid being removed from play, leading to a delay in diagnosis and potentially putting them at risk for further injury.

One of the biggest concerns surrounding concussions is the potential for long-term effects on brain health. Repeated concussions, particularly those that occur in a short period of time, can lead to a condition known as Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). CTE is a degenerative brain disease that can cause a range of symptoms, including memory loss, mood swings, and difficulty with motor functions. While not every athlete who experiences a concussion will develop CTE, the risk increases with each subsequent injury.

In recent years, there has been increased attention given to the issue of sports-related concussions, particularly in contact sports such as football and hockey. As a result, many sports organizations and governing bodies have implemented concussion protocols designed to protect athletes from further injury. These protocols typically involve removing an athlete from play if they exhibit any signs of a concussion and requiring them to undergo a series of tests before being cleared to return to play.

Another key aspect of concussion management is education. Coaches, athletes, and parents all need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of a concussion and understand the potential risks associated with playing through an injury. Athletes who have a history of concussions may need to be managed differently to reduce their risk of further injury.

In addition to the immediate and long-term health effects of concussions, there are also significant economic implications associated with these injuries. The costs of medical treatment, lost productivity, and disability can be substantial, particularly for athletes who suffer from repeated injuries. Furthermore, there is the potential for lawsuits against sports organizations and governing bodies for failing to adequately protect athletes from the risks of concussion.

To address these concerns, healthcare professionals are working to develop new and improved methods for diagnosing and managing concussions. This includes the use of advanced imaging techniques, such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and functional MRI, to better understand the underlying mechanisms of concussion and develop more targeted treatments.

Sports-related concussions represent a significant public health issue that requires a multifaceted approach to address. This includes improving education and awareness among athletes, coaches, and parents, implementing more effective concussion protocols, and investing in research to develop better diagnostic tools and treatments. By working together, we can help to protect the health and wellbeing of young athletes and ensure that they can continue to enjoy the many benefits of sports while minimizing the risks.

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