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## Young Athletes May Underreport Concussion Symptoms

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SATURDAY, Sept. 23 (HealthDay News) -- Doctors who rely on young athletes' reports of concussion symptoms may be sending the athletes back to play too soon, according to a new study.

Reporting in the October online issue of the *American Journal of Sports Medicine*, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center researchers evaluated 22 high school athletes who had concussions.

The athletes had undergone neurocognitive testing before their season began and again after having the concussion. Neurocognitive testing involves tests that measure memory, motor skills, processing speed, reaction time and concussion symptom levels.

Just 64 percent of the athletes reported a significant increase in symptoms compared to pre-season reporting, but the neurocognitive testing revealed that 83 percent of them had poorer test results compared to pre-season testing. The use of both symptom reporting and neurocognitive testing was significantly more accurate than symptom reporting alone, the study found.

The danger in relying on symptom reports alone is that the athletes may be released to return to play too soon, before their brains have healed, making them vulnerable to further injury.

"Generally, an athlete who sustains an initial concussion can fully recover, as long as the brain has had time to heal before sustaining another hit," Micky Collins, study co-author and assistant director of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Sports Medicine Concussion program, said in a prepared statement.

"The tricky part is that concussion signs and symptoms are not always straightforward, and the effects and severity of the injury can be difficult to determine," Collins said."

Neurocognitive testing is becoming widely used by high schools, colleges and universities, sports teams, and sports medicine clinics. Athletes can take a pre-season test, which can later be compared to a post-concussion test, if necessary.

### More information

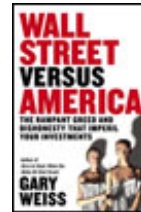
The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [concussions in sports](#).

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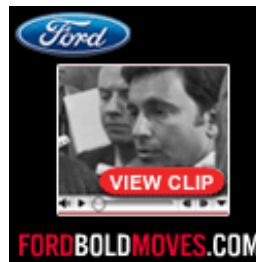
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