

Study finds girl soccer players five times more likely than boys to return to play same day

15 September 2017

A new study found girls were significantly more likely than boys to return to play the same day following a soccer-related concussion, placing them at risk for more significant injury.

The study abstract, "Gender Differences in Same-Day Return to Play Following Concussion Among Pediatric Soccer Players," will be presented on Saturday, Sept. 16, during the American Academy of Pediatrics 2017 National Conference & Exhibition in Chicago.

The study examined young athletes, average age 14, who sustained a concussion while playing soccer and who were treated at a pediatric [sports medicine](#) clinic in Texas. Of the 87 athletes diagnosed with a soccer-related concussion, two-thirds (66.7 percent) were girls. Among them, more than half (51.7 percent) resumed playing in a game or practice the same day as their injury, compared to just 17.2 percent of boys.

"The girl soccer players were 5 times more likely than boys to return to play on the same day as their [concussion](#)," said Shane M. Miller, MD, FAAP, senior author of the abstract and a sports medicine physician at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. "This is cause for concern, especially with previous studies showing that girls suffer twice as many concussions as boys," he said.

"Consistent with our findings in other sports, young [soccer players](#) are returning to play on the same day despite recommendations from medical organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, and laws in all 50 states intended to protect their growing brains," he said. "Despite increased concerns about the risks of concussions, the culture among athletes to tough it out and play through an injury often takes priority over the importance of reporting an injury and coming out of

a game or practice."

"Considering the dangers of returning to play prematurely, parents need to familiarize themselves with organizational guidelines for concussions, which should be aligned with current national recommendations, and should have a heightened awareness of signs and symptoms of concussions," said Aaron Zynda, the abstract's lead author and Texas Scottish Rite's clinical research coordinator. "Current education efforts may not be enough to help athletes, parents and coaches identify [concussion symptoms](#), know the guidelines for immediate removal from play and understand the risks of returning to play after an [injury](#). More research is needed on how to better spread this message intended to protect the health of [young athletes](#) and help them comply with state laws."

"Concussion recognition and identification is a team effort," Zynda said. "Athletes, parents, coaches and medical staff need to come together to prevent premature return to play."

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

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