

Newsletter

Issue 2, 2019

Concussion - Just Another Head Knock?

By Dr Donald Kuah

Concussion has in recent years become a major talking point in football codes around the world. It is becoming apparent that repetitive head trauma through a players' career, at any level, can lead to serious health consequences in the future.

This new information has led to changes in rules across our sporting codes, major litigation cases in the USA and even a major Hollywood movie "Concussion" featuring Will Smith.

What is Concussion?

In everyday language, concussion refers to an immediate change in the way the brain functions after a direct or indirect blow. Concussion relates to functional rather than structural changes in brain function which resolve over time, it may or may not be associated with a loss of

consciousness or 'being knocked out'. Children and adolescents (developing brains) are more susceptible to these injuries and they can take a longer time to recover.



What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms can be wide ranging from on field seizures to confusion, headaches, dizziness, change in behaviour, anxiety or vomiting. These symptoms generally last for a short time following the injury - days to weeks. However, in severe cases, they can last many months and affect day to day life such as school or work.

What are the risks?

The immediate risks of concussion are the changes in the function of the brain. A player who continues to play while concussed is more likely to have a second head injury or other major injury while their balance and brain function is altered. Secondly, players, especially junior players, need close supervision following a head injury as occasionally they can deteriorate and need hospital medical care.

The long term risks of concussion and repetitive head trauma are of a greater concern. Recent studies have shown that repetitive head knocks are possibly related to the onset of a form of dementia known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) and also higher rates of mental health issues in retired

athletes. More research is needed in these areas to be certain, but at this stage it is much better to be safe than sorry.

What steps should be taken?

All players who have a suspected concussion, or major head knock, need to be taken from the field and assessed by a qualified medical officer. The NRL, rugby union and AFL have all implemented new rules which allow for this process without using an important interchange. If a player is diagnosed as having a concussive injury, then they are unable to return to play that day.

Continued over page



Dr Donald Kuah is a Sports and Exercise Physician & Partner at Sydney Sports Medicine Centre.

Practitioner Spotlight - Melanie Tri, Physiotherapist



Melanie is a Canadian born, Australian trained physiotherapist with a special interest in sports, long term athlete development, and functional rehabilitation.

She is an advocate for gender equality in sport, by constantly promoting access to sport therapy in female sports and engaging others to be a catalyst for positive change.

Mel has been playing rugby union for over 10 years and has played at the university and club level, with Championship wins in 2015 and 2016 while playing for The Sydney University Women's Rugby Club.

Melanie is currently the Physiotherapy Coordinator for NSW Institute of Sport Hockey and Netball programs.

Melanie's clinical approach is hands-on and movement focused, with individualised treatment plans suitable for all ages and activity levels.

Services

Sports and Exercise
Physicians

Physiotherapy

Podiatry

Remedial Massage

Exercise Physiology

Nutrition

Sports Psychology

Rehabilitation Physician

Orthopaedic Surgeons

Did You Know?

Dr Kuah was awarded the Sports Medal by the Commonwealth in 2000 for his services to Sports Medicine.

News at SSMC

SSMC are proud to have partnered with Netball NSW to provide physiotherapy coverage for the 2019 Dooley's Metro League Competition commencing in April 2019.

The Metro League is one of the premier netball competitions in NSW with sixty teams competing across three nights over 18 rounds plus finals.

Our Physios have extensive experience in netball injury rehabilitation and prevention and are the current Netball NSWIS Physiotherapy providers.

Sydney Sports Medicine Centre
NSW Institute of Sport Building
L2, 6 Figtree Drive
Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127

P: 02 9764 3131
F: 02 9764 3443

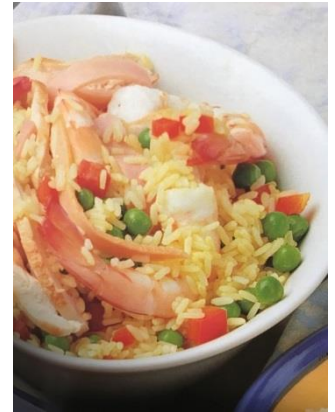
www.ssmc.com.au

Recipe - Speedy Paella

Serves: 4
Time to make: 15 Minutes
Diet Information: Dairy Free
High in Fibre
Low Fat
High in Carbohydrates

Ingredients

2 x skinless boneless chicken breast fillets, cut into strips
8 x large uncooked prawns, shelled and deveined
4 slices reduced-fat-and-salt ham, sliced
2 cups (440g) of cooked rice
½ cup (125mL) chicken stock
60g fresh or frozen peas
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
Pinch ground turmeric
Freshly ground black pepper



Directions

Heat a nonstick frying pan over a high heat, add chicken and stir-fry for 4-5 minutes or until tender. Remove from pan and set aside. Add prawns to the pan and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes or until prawns change colour and are cooked through.

Return chicken to pan, add ham, rice, turmeric, stock, peas and parsley and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until heated through. Season to taste with black pepper and serve.

Nutrition Info (per serve)

Energy:	2005kJ	Calories:	475cal
Carbohydrates:	81g	Fat:	4g

Image above is a guide only.

Original recipe published in the "The Taste of Fitness", (with kind permission of Dr Helen O'Connor)

Concussion... continued

We recommend that all people with diagnosed concussion should be seen by a doctor within the next couple of days where they can be re-assessed and undergo concussion testing. If appropriate, the player may be guided through a return to play protocol.

The return to play protocol followed by most contact sports will require 6 steps over at least 6 days for a safe return to play.



Common Myths on Concussion

If a player feels fine after a coming off for a concussion, they can return to play without risk.

FALSE. If no medical assessment is available, the best advice is not to return to play. Signs of concussion can be quite subtle.

The number of concussions during a season doesn't matter as long as the symptoms resolve each time.

FALSE. There appears to be a cumulative, negative impact of repeated concussions.

If there has been no direct knock to the head then it cannot be concussion.

FALSE. Concussion can occur just by sudden deceleration of the skull.

Wearing headgear will prevent or protect players from concussions.

FALSE. Headgear may help protect against lacerations and skull impact injuries, however some studies have shown that headgear can also give false a sense of security, encouraging more aggressive play that could lead to a higher chance of concussion.