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Type of Helmet, May Not Lower Concussion Risk

CHICAGO, IL – 40,000 high school football kids get a concussion every year, but contrary to equipment manufacturers' claims, the specific brand of helmet and helmet age were not associated with lower risk of concussion, say researchers presenting their work today at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL.

“According to our research, lower risks of sustaining a sports-related concussion (SRC) and its severity were not improved based on a specific manufacturer. In addition, the SRC rates were similar for players wearing new helmets, as compared to those wearing older ones,” said lead author, Timothy McGuine, PhD, ATC of the University of Wisconsin. “It is also interesting to note, that players who wore a generic mouth guard provided by the school had a lower rate of SRC compared to players with more expensive mouth guards.”

Researchers collected data by Licensed Athletic Trainers (ATCs) at 36 public and private high schools in Wisconsin during the 2012 football season. A sample of 1,332 players were enrolled in the study with 251 individuals having reported at least one SRC within the last six years, and 171 reported one SRC within the previous 12 months. ATCs at each school recorded the helmet brand, model and purchase year, as well as the type of mouth guard utilized (generic, specialized or custom fit.) ATCs also recorded the number and type of exposure (practice vs. game) and the number of SRCs sustained.

“Increased risk of concussions in our study was not associated with age, BMI, grade in school, level of competition or years of football experience. However, players with a history of SRC were twice as likely to sustain another one compared to players without a history. Additional screening to identify those players with increased concussion risk is a key to prevention and hopefully will help reduce rates in the future,” said McGuine.

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The [American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine](http://www.aossm.org) (AOSSM) is a world leader in sports medicine education, research, communication and fellowship, and includes national and international orthopaedic sports medicine leaders. The Society works closely with many other sports medicine specialists, including athletic trainers, physical therapists, family physicians, and others to improve the identification, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of sports injuries. AOSSM is also a founding partner of the [STOP Sports Injuries](http://www.stop-sports-injuries.org) campaign to prevent overuse and traumatic injuries in kids. For more information on AOSSM or the STOP Sports Injuries campaign, visit www.sportsmed.org or www.stop-sports-injuries.org