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Hello,

I am emailing you to tell you about a new, exciting research study being conducted by researchers at the University of Victoria. Our researchers are seeking to better understand how the physiology of youth soccer players may be affected by repetitive sub-concussive impacts during heading drills.

Although mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) is attracting more media attention than ever before, little is known about sub-concussive impacts. Sub-concussive impacts are contacts to the head from other players, the ball, the ground, etc. that do not cause the typical concussive symptoms, but still cause changes to the brain. Repetitive sub-concussive impacts have been previously investigated using football athletes. However, soccer is unique as it is the only sport where the head is intentionally used as a surface for impact, and therefore, is receiving increasing attention. Sub-concussive impacts, as believed to be caused by heading, are of increased concern for young athletes who are still undergoing cognitive changes and development.

Heading in soccer has received much media attention in Canada as well as the US. The US Youth Soccer Federation has recently released recommendations potentially altering the amount of heading in youth soccer in response to current research findings. However, these research findings lack consensus. Investigating the potential injury of heading in soccer in a controlled environment may assist others (coaches, parents, and soccer clubs and organizations) in making informed decisions on whether new protocols should be implemented to keep the game fun but safe. Additionally, investigating heading presents an opportunity to determine if sub-concussive impact results in similar cognitive and physical changes as concussions.

We are seeking youth soccer players between the ages of 13-25 who have experience with heading a soccer ball. In a safe and controlled environment, participants will complete running, heading, and catching exercises while wearing heart rate monitors. The heading exercises involved will be very similar to those of a typical soccer practice. Additionally, as a safety precaution, each day of testing will take the place of a regular soccer practice. This is to ensure that there is no additional exposure to heading by participating in this study while the effects are still unknown.

If you are interested in learning more about and/or participating in this research opportunity, or know of someone who might be, please do not hesitate to contact us for more information. Please help us spread the word about our new study!

Samantha Kennedy (Student), Amanda McQuarrie (Student), Dr. Brian Christie (Supervisor), and Dr. Lynneth Stuart-Hill (Supervisor)
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University of Victoria

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH

Are soccer players at a higher risk of head injury?

Researchers at the University of Victoria are conducting a study to determine how repetitive heading in soccer may affect cognition and heart rate variability. Our goal is to keep the game safe and fun!

Do you have previous heading experience?
Are you interested in participating?

We are seeking youth soccer players between the ages of 13-25. If you are interested in participating, researchers will attend your team soccer practice. Participants will complete running, heading, and catching exercises in a safe and controlled environment while wearing heart rate monitors. All potential participants will be screened for eligibility before participating.

For details, please contact the Project Coordinators
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