

Study warns of youths with concussions

By Oliver Renick, Bloomberg

Football accounted for 57 percent of trauma-related sports deaths among youth, many that would have been prevented if athletes with head injuries had been kept off the field, said researchers who analyzed 30 years of data.

The report, which reviewed information from a U.S. registry of 1,827 sudden deaths of young athletes from 1980 to 2009, found that 261, or 14 percent, were caused by blunt trauma. The study, published this week in the journal of *Pediatrics*, analyzed data on fatal injuries that occurred during 22 different sports.

Twelve percent of the 138 football deaths caused by head or neck injuries involved students who returned to the game after a concussion, researchers said. In some of these “second-impact syndrome” deaths, athletes were cleared for play despite symptoms from a previous head injury. More education is needed for coaches, trainers, parents and students on the consequences of repeat head blows, the researchers said in the report.

“Second-impact syndrome is avoidable,” said study author Dr. Barry Maron of the Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation, a cardiovascular education and research center. “It’s obviously a coaching and medical issue to avoid this, independent of the equipment used, so football players do not return prematurely to play.”

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