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rates of both mild cognitive impairment and Parkinsonism. Read more: Youth football can be quite safe, pediatricians The result of a study published in Mayo Clinic Proceedings seems to be in opposition to recent revelations that many former professional footballers suffer from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain disease associated with repeated head trauma. It will be somewhat resurring, Dr. Gregory Landry, a pediatric and adolescent primary care physician from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, told Healthline. But it's a relatively small sample size, and the game has changed since the 50s and 60s. Researchers from the Mayo Clinic study acknowledged that their findings should not be interpreted as proving that football is harmless, acting: There may be a risk gradient, with low potential in high school football players who played during the study period. Landry echoes that sentiment, pointing out: There's no question that as you get older in the speed of the injury goes up. Study after study found that . Read more: Changing the way footballs Concussion testing protocol has been introduced in contact sports, at all levels, in recent years as awareness of head injuries has increased. Dr. Gregory Stewart, co-director of Tulane University's sports medicine program, says head injuries. I tell my athletes when they come in: If it was an ankle sprain, I would tell you to suck it up and come back and play. But this is your brain. If you have a sore head and other symptoms, you need to do - he told Healthline. Landry says it's a marked contrast to how concussions have been treated in the past. I don't think we recognized that some of these relatively mild head injuries really had concussions to the brain and that when it happened, the player shouldn't be in the game, he said. I think the players, coaches and parents recognize concussions a lot more readily. Any impaired mental function after a head kick is a concussion of the brain, and athletes should not practice or play if they are impaired in any way. ... Rule changes are also crucial when it comes to injury prevention. ... I think one of the biggest things that's happened is U.S. Soccer has decided that it's very important that coaches teach good tackling technique, Landry said. I think you can see that at every level now - that there are fewer dangerous hits and that's imperative. Patrick Kersey, U.S. soccer medical director, outlined some ways work to reduce the risk. He told Healthline: There has been a concerted focus on fitting equipment. There have also been significant educational steps taken with coaches as well as all participants in understanding head injuries. Read more: Doctors diagnose football dementia in living patients »While attitudes and awareness of surrounding head injuries in football have changed significantly, there is still a big gap when it comes to fully understanding these injuries. As we continue to evaluate and study this trauma, we continue to be treated as well as prevent, Kersey said. The way we manage brain concussions today compared to how we managed concussions even 10 years ago is significantly different,' Stewart said. And because of that, this pendulum caved in - and with a pendulum swing like this, we won't know if what we're doing right today or not is probably another 10 or 15 years old. Stewart hopes that with continued research, the medical community will find further ways to minimize risk in the future. I think if we continue to manage it right, we'll be fine, he says. And then as we move forward with a lot of research that continues and keep moving forward, I think we'll get to a point where we have some answers. I think at some point we'll be able to have a battery of tests where we can say: You're at a significantly higher risk of developing CTE, so you don't have to participate in this sport. Football players are much more likely to suffer than other high school competitors, but the chances of injury support may not be as high as you might think. Share on PinterestIf a teenager plays four years of high school football, chances are they will sustain the trauma of some sort. In fact, a high school athlete is about three times more likely to get hurt than competitors in other major sports. Except that the injury is more likely to be on the head or face. It's also much more likely that an injury will occur during a game rather than practice. However, it is unlikely that the injury will require surgery. And if that happens, chances are it won't have serious lingering consequences along the way. Here are some of the conclusions you can reach by asking for statistics and talking to sports experts about high school football players. These experts add that advances in treatment, as well as injury prevention, help keep the number and severity of injuries down. They also note that upside down participation in sport can make the risk of injury somewhat minor. The benefits of participating in team sports far outweigh the risks. M.C - told Healthline. Read more: Youth football can be quite safe » Almost 8 teenagers are now involved in school sports. That's double the 4 million who participated in the 1971-72 school year. Over the past decade, the injuries experienced by these athletes have been monitored by the Colorado School of Public Health's Injury, Education and Research (PIPER) program. The team, led by Professor Dawn Comstok, lays out an annual report on injuries sustained in nine major school sports. The report has detailed statistics from 100 high schools across the country, as well as estimated numbers for all secondary schools. This data gleams from high school sports officials every Monday during the season. The statistics are broken down by the number of injuries, the number of athlete contacts and the rate of injuries for every 1,000 of those contacts. Injuries are defined as any event that requires medical attention and keeps an athlete from participating in games or practices for at least one day. In addition, all fractures, concussions of the brain, injuries of teeth and heat events are considered injuries. Exposures are defined as one athlete participating in a single game or practice. For example, if 20 players get into the game, it's 20 exposures for this squad. Read more: Lawmakers make a pitch for youth sports safety »Over the past decade there have been an average of about 4 injuries per 1,000 exposure athletes in competitions for all nine sports combined. For high school football players, the rate during the competition ranges from 11.26 to 13.52 injuries per 1,000 athletes. The sport with the second highest rate is maiden football, which rises just above 5 injuries per 1,000 exposures each year. For football, the injury rate during practice is right around 2 incidents per 1,000 exposures. This compares with an average speed of less than 1.5 per 1,000 exposures for all nine sports combined. Overall, Colorado researchers estimate that there are more than 500,000 injuries of some kind for high school football players nationwide each year. In most years, less than 10 percent of these injuries and 10 percent shoulders. These included brain concussions. Another 14 percent were knees, 11 percent ankles and 10 percent shoulders. About 68 percent of injuries occurred while the players were tackling. Another 22 percent occurred while blocking players. Read more: Why your kids should play more than one sport » Safety concerns were raised last year when it was reported that at least 11 high school football players died in the United States during the 2015 season. Two years earlier, a study was published that concluded that high school players were nearly twice as likely to have concussion rates as college players. However, experts said more complex medical procedures and better prophylaxis keeps holding about football injuries and reducing their severity. Scott Sailor, president of the National Association of Athletics Coaches (NATA), says athletes are also better physically prepared for contact sports than in decades past, helping to reduce the seriousness of injuries. When surgery or other medical care is needed, he says, safer and better methods are now available. Sailor also told Healthline that it's important for schools to have athletic trainers, especially during competitions. He said only 37 percent of U.S. high schools currently have a full-time athletic trainer. Some of these precautions also apply to football practice. Putukian notes that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) now restricts contact practice twice a week to football teams. In addition, Ivy League teams do not allow to decide in practice. Putsukian said some of the activities can be challenging for school teams. She and Sailor also point out that there are new coaching techniques to help reduce football injuries. One is the Heads Up Football program overseen by U.S. Soccer. The software promotes solving and blocking methods designed to make the game safer. Read more: Sports can offer athletes protection against opioid abuse » Sailor and Putsukian agree that parents need to take the lead when it comes to their child's athletic safety. Putsukian encourages parents to field both the school curriculum and the football coach before their child signs up. For example, does a coach teach good tricks and put the safety of his athletes first? You need to do your homework,' she said. NATA has launched the At Your Risk program, which provides information for parents, athletes and school sports safety officials. The sailor says he feels all measures taken to make football a relatively safe contact sport for high school students. If my son wanted to play football, I would let him play football, he said. Said

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