



The Growing Local and National Focus on Brain Injury: A Timely Trend That is Long Overdue

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Football is America's most popular sport. In recent years, a growing body of evidence has shown that concussions, especially repeat concussions that may occur in high impact sports, can lead to devastating brain injury. This has been shown to be true not only in professional athletes, but in children as well.

In contrast to years past, we no longer have to look very hard to find the discussion about the relationship between sports and [brain injury](#). Not too long ago, getting your "bell rung" was viewed as "just part of the game." That mindset, however, is losing its general acceptance in our communities and schools. Perhaps not quickly enough, but it is happening.

As I have written about previously, the peer reviewed literature is demonstrating that there is mounting evidence of the connection between [sports related concussions](#) and lasting brain injury. And now the popular media is catching on.

A wonderful new documentary explores the issue through a series of interviews. *Head Games*, directed and co-produced by Steve James (who also created the popular film, *Hoop Dreams*), explores the consequences of sports related brain injury. The film shines a spotlight on the dangers of head injury in youth sports, including football, hockey, and soccer. Chris Nowinski, the author of the book that inspired the film, commented that the question it poses to community leaders, coaches, parents, and teachers is: "Are we doing enough to protect our children?" A rhetorical question that needs to be driven home in every community in the United States.

The film is timely, as is evidenced by a recently published study that was carried out by researchers at the University of North Carolina and Emerson Hospital in Concord, Massachusetts. The study, titled *Annual Survey of Catastrophic Football Injuries (1977-2011)*, studies two trends and finds that while fatalities in football are down, the incidence of traumatic brain injury is increasing. The author of the study, Frederick Mueller, MD, opined that the findings are likely the result of children getting better, life saving, medical care on the field, resulting in their survival. But survival with brain injury. The study's findings highlight the need for parents, teachers, coaches, school administrators, and health care providers to make sure schools have a plan in place to train coaches on the [signs and symptoms of brain injury](#), and to have an emergency plan in place to deal with brain injury at the earliest opportunity.

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Kershaw, Cutter & Ratinoff represents injured plaintiffs in [automobile](#) and [motorcycle accidents](#), [traumatic brain injuries](#), defective products, dangerous drugs & medical devices, as well as [insurance bad faith](#) matters. Founding partner Eric Ratinoff has successfully tried and settled numerous cases on behalf of his clients, earning large recoveries in cases involving disability, health, auto, property, long term care, business, fire & casualty, commercial and life insurance policies. Mr. Ratinoff is AV Rated through Martindale Hubbell (its highest rating). He has also been named a Northern California Super Lawyer for 2010 and 2011.