

# Football Players' Perceptions of Factors Contributing to Increased Concussions

Iyonna Dunning, Tanya Terry, and Jaivon Bottoms  
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## Introduction

When a football player suffers a concussion during a game or in practice, whether they are a professional or a high school student, it is serious business.

Doctors, coaches, and researchers are focused on the damage concussions can do to football players' brains as a result of the many tackles they endure.

Research shows that athletes who have repeated concussions are more likely to get long-term brain damage, including a condition known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a brain disease that mimics dementia. Beyond this, there are many other health risks associated with concussions and ultimately they can lead to death.

Although researchers have studied this topic extensively on the professional level, many studies fail to engage high school students in identifying concussion factors.

## Research Question

What factors contribute to increases in football concussions among high school athletes in Pittsburgh?

## Hypothesis

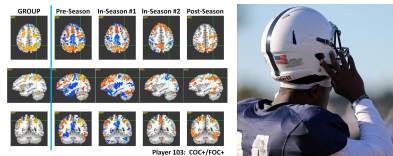
There is a relationship between football players concussions and various equipment and environmental factors.

## Methods

Researchers conducted a survey on the factors influencing football concussions. Researchers created this survey using questions developed during an in class session for their community-based research projects. The survey consisted of 21 questions. The first section captures the demographics of survey respondents. The second set included community needs. The next set explored study specific questions. Respondents were asked the following

- Have you ever experienced a concussion?
- Do you feel safe on the field?
- Do you believe your helmet protects you on the field?
- What factors do you believe contribute most to concussions?

Additionally, researchers distributed their survey by sending links to people and receiving consent from respondents.



## Results

Race	Black (95%)
Gender	Male (60%)
Age	15 & under (81%)
Household Status	Two- parent household (50%)
Household Income	Unknown (64%)

Have you ever experienced a concussion? (76%)

Do you believe it is common to get a concussion in football? (86%)

Do you feel like helmets protect you on the field? (60%)

Do you feel safe on the field? (81%)

## Discussion

In our study, we experienced limitations with our survey population. Nearly 40% of our survey respondents were females, although our targeted audience were PPS Football Players. Secondly, because the survey context was Pittsburgh athletes, it is unlikely that our results are transferable to other contexts. The school one attends and the training one receives may also impact individuals' experiences with concussions - despite this, our study did not ask questions about school and athletic facilities and opportunities.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, most our survey respondents experienced concussions which means they witnessed first hand the challenges with such an injury. Our survey respondents are not believers in helmets as they are calling for reconsideration of such protection protocol. The findings they offered is valuable contextual evidence regarding their perceptions of high school football concussion factors. Our study's results suggest that we should look further into football equipment to understand how it might prevent or elicit concussions from happening. Researches should continue exploring how to create safer environments for the football players. In following studies, researches should consider a larger population of survey respondents from a variety of schools and districts.