



Contact: Lisa Weisenberger, AOSSM Director of Communications at 847/655-8647 or e-mail lisa@aossm.org

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL SUNDAY, July 10th at 6:00 AM EST

Concussions on the Rise for Adolescents, Researchers Say

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO – Sustaining a concussion during adolescence may be more common than previous estimates, according to researchers presenting their study at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine’s Annual Meeting in Colorado Springs, CO today.

“Our team looked at the administrative health records of more than 8.8 million members of a large private payer insurance group and noted that 32 percent of the individuals diagnosed with concussion were between the ages of 10-19 years old with the largest increase in incidence between 2007 and 2014 in that age group. This is the first study to evaluate trends in concussion diagnoses across the general US population in a variety of age groups,” said lead author, Alan L. Zhang, MD from the University of California San Francisco Medical Center.

The highest incidence of concussion was seen in the 15-19 age group (16.5 cases per 1,000 patients) followed by the 10-14 (10.5 per 1,000), 20-24 (5.2 per 1,000) and 5-9 (3.5 per 1,000) age groups. Overall, there was a 60% increase in concussion incidence from 2007-2014. The largest increases were in the 10-14 (143%) and 15-19 (87%) age groups. Fifty-six percent of concussions were diagnosed in the emergency room and 29% in a physician’s office with the remainder being seen in urgent care or inpatient settings.

Zhang and his team also noted that irrespective of sport, the incidence of concussion in male patients was one and a half times higher than that in female patients.

“The rates at which concussions are rising may in part be due to the rise in youth sports participation and also better diagnostic skills/training for coaches and sports medicine professionals. This trend is alarming however, and the youth population should definitely be prioritized for ongoing work in concussion diagnosis, education, treatment and prevention,” said Zhang.

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The [American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine](http://www.aossm.org) (AOSSM) is a global leader in orthopaedic sports medicine education, research, communication and fellowship, and includes national and international sports medicine leaders. The Society works closely with many other sports medicine specialists, including athletic trainers, physical therapists, family physicians, and others to improve the identification, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of sports injuries. AOSSM is also a founding partner of the [STOP Sports Injuries](http://www.stop-sports-injuries.org) campaign to prevent overuse and traumatic injuries in kids.