

## Suffering concussion increases the risk of developing dementia by 72 per cent, research suggests

- Health records from concussions patients showed a 72 per cent increased risk of dementia
- Concussion patients had a 57 per cent greater chance of getting Parkinson's
- Scientists in Canada say increased risk may be due to disrupted blood flow to the brain

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Suffering concussion increases the risk of developing dementia and Parkinson's disease later in life, research suggests.

Health records from 47,483 concussion patients, who were tracked for 25 years, showed they had a 72 per cent increased risk of dementia, compared with those who had not suffered a brain injury.

The concussion patients had a 57 per cent greater chance of getting Parkinson's and were 72 per cent more likely to suffer mood and anxiety disorders.

Women who had a concussion were 28 per cent more likely to develop attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and a 7 per cent greater chance of mood and anxiety disorders compared to men.

- **Health records from 47,483 concussion patients, who were tracked for 25 years, showed they had a 72 per cent increased risk of dementia (file photo)**

Scientists, from the University of Manitoba, Canada, say the increased risk of neurological problems may be due to disrupted blood flow to the brain or an interference in key hormones, such as cortisol. The findings of the study were published in BMJ journal Family Medicine and Community Health.

A team of Canadian researchers examined data on almost 50,000 people who had suffered a concussion between 1990 and 1991 and then tracked their health again in 2014 and 2015.

They compared 28,021 men and 19,462 women who had suffered concussion in the early 1990s with almost 140,000 healthy participants who had not suffered concussion.

The authors wrote: 'Concussion was associated with an increased risk of diagnosis of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, mood and anxiety disorders, dementia and Parkinson's disease later in life.

'Our findings suggest that concussion may be a risk factor for the development of comorbid conditions in the years following initial injury.'

Concussion is classed as a temporary injury to the brain caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head.

- **Concussion is classed as a temporary injury to the brain caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head**

It typically lasts up to a few days or weeks, although it sometimes needs emergency treatment and some people can have longer-lasting problems.

Signs of a concussion usually appear within a few minutes or hours of a head injury, but they can take as long as a few days.

Symptoms can include: a headache that does not go away or is not relieved with painkillers; dizziness; feeling or being sick; memory loss; clumsiness or trouble with balance; feeling stunned, dazed or confused; changes in vision; being knocked out or struggling to stay awake.

Concussion is harder to spot among young children and babies.

Carers are urged to look out for changes in their normal behaviour after a head injury, such as excessive crying, differences in their feeding or sleeping habits or a loss of interest in people or objects.

There is no guaranteed way to prevent concussion but people can follow simple safety steps such as wearing a helmet when cycling or wearing the recommended equipment when taking part in a contact sport, such as rugby or boxing.