Do Children Whose Parents are Pediatricians Play Tackle Football?

A large proportion of all sports-related concussions occur in children. Concussions account for 9% of all high school athletic injuries. Primary care pediatricians care for a significant proportion of children with concussions, with more than 80% of concussed children and adolescents having their first visit with a pediatric primary care provider. Given pediatricians’ front-line role in concussion management, what is their attitude to children’s participation in contact sports, such as football and ice hockey?

An anonymous electronic survey was distributed three times to members of three different American Academy of Pediatrics special interest sections: Section of Bioethics; Council on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention; and Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness. Of 791 eligible pediatricians, 227 (29%) responded. Most respondents (85%) treat sports related concussions. Of these, 83% reported access to an established return-to-play protocol within their practice. Virtually all (96%) reported increased parental awareness/concern regarding concussions and 85% reported increased visits for head trauma.

Overall, 77% would not allow their son to play tackle football and 35% and 34% would not allow their son or daughter, respectively, to participate in ice hockey. Most respondents endorsed limiting or eliminating tackling in football (81%) and checking in hockey (80%) from at least practice sessions in these sports. Respondents were evenly divided in their support for counseling against youth participation in full-contact sports, with 48% in favor. So, most pediatricians would not allow their own child to play tackle football and most endorsed limiting or eliminating tackling in practice.

Comment. I wonder what a survey of school nurses would be for their own children in these high school sports. —H.T.

When Foster Care is Over

With over 400,000 children in foster care and about 100,000 children waiting for adoption, many children will age out of the child protection system before they are adopted. Researchers actually suggest that if “the child reaches 8 or 9 years old, they will most likely remain in foster care until age 18”. Therefore, nurses and other social supports in the community need to be prepared to help these children navigate the adult world. This practice article discussed the outcomes for youth...