

Information for Sports Clubs and Athletes:
**Improving diagnostics and therapy
after head trauma**

Why is this project important?

Up until recently, it was assumed that a concussion only affects the brain. However, new studies show that in many cases the organ of equilibrium and/or the cervical spine are also affected. This has fundamental effects on the treatment: while an initial resting phase is essential in the case of a central injury (primarily located in the brain), a peripheral injury (affecting the equilibrium and cervical spine) requires immediate treatment to accelerate central compensation mechanisms.

Due to a lack of reference values, it can be hard to determine to what extent the medical findings after a head trauma are the result of the acute concussion or pre-existed. In order to develop treatments that are individualised, symptom-specific and more cost and time efficient, our research aim is to better differentiate between symptoms and medical findings of peripheral and centrally located dysfunctions.

What is the plan?

300 elite athletes will be examined prior to the start of the season. All athletes who sustain a head trauma during the season will be re-examined to allow for a comparison between individual medical findings before and after the injury.

What will be expected of athletes and clubs?

The athletes will undergo a baseline examination before the start of the season. All athletes who sustain a head trauma in the season 2018/19 will be re-examined at the SCC and treated upon request. This will be free of charge for both the athlete and the club.

What will be examined?

A clinical examination by a neurologist, as well as examinations using advanced technology devices will be performed on the athlete's vestibular and balance system, their visual system, eye movements, cervical spine and neurocognition. In addition, anamnestic information and complaints will be documented using a questionnaire.

Where will the examinations be performed?

All examinations will be conducted at the Schulthess Clinic or, in the case of team examinations, on the premises of the sports clubs.

What is the duration of the examinations?

The examinations will last 3 to 4 hours. The baseline examination can be organised in a way that 8 athletes can take part as a group to allow for an entire team to be examined in one day. We offer individual appointments to injured athletes.

What are the benefits for athletes and clubs?

All athletes receive a comprehensive baseline examination which includes important reference data for the treatment decisions in the case of a head trauma. Should a head trauma occur, we will conduct free additional examinations that might not be covered by the athlete's insurance. This will enable a more specialised, effective treatment and a controlled return-to-play of the injured athlete.

Who is in charge of the project and my contact person?

Dr. med. Nina Feddermann-Demont, Swiss Concussion Center (SCC)
Schulthess Klinik, Lengghalde 2, CH-8008 Zürich
Telefon: +41 44 385 72 00; email: nina.feddermann@swissconcussion.com