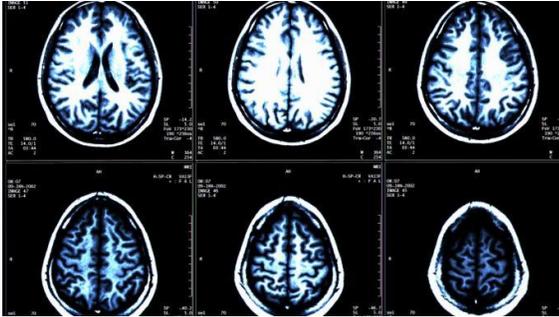


## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Dementia risk rises 17% after suffering a single concussion



People who sustained a traumatic brain injury were 24 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with dementia

A single case of concussion raises a person's dementia risk by 17 per cent, a major study has found.

Researchers analysed data on 2.8 million people for the study, published in *The Lancet Psychiatry*. The findings are likely to lead to renewed calls for contact sports such as rugby to be made safer.

The study found that people who had sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI) were 24 per cent more likely than their peers to be diagnosed with dementia during the 36-year study period. Some 5.3 per cent of participants with dementia had a recorded TBI, compared with 4.7 per cent without dementia. TBIs occur when a bump or blow to the head disrupts the normal function of the brain, for example in falls, car accidents or assaults.

The study found that the younger someone was when they first sustained a TBI, the greater their risk of developing dementia. Those who suffered a TBI in their 20s were 63 per cent more likely to develop dementia in later life than those who did not. The figure for people who suffered a TBI in their 30s was 37 per cent.

The results are likely to be seized on by campaigners who believe that participation in sports such as rugby or American football is putting young people's brain health at risk, although the study did not address sports injuries directly.

Researchers found that the risk of dementia increased in line with severity of the injury. A single severe TBI increased the risk by 35 per cent, while a mild TBI – a concussion – increased it by 17 per cent. It also rose in line with the number of injuries. One TBI was linked to a 22 per cent higher risk of dementia, rising to 61 per cent after 4 TBI. Five or more tripled the risk of dementia. Jesse Fann, a professor at the University of Washington in Seattle, who led the study, said: "Our analysis raises some very important issues, in particular that efforts to prevent traumatic brain injury, especially in younger people, may be inadequate considering the huge and growing burden of dementia and the prevalence of TBI worldwide."

In a linked comment article, Carol Brayne from the University of Cambridge wrote: “It is likely that prevention needs to be considered at societal, community, and local levels.”

The researchers also looked for a link between dementia and those who had had fractures not involving the skull or spine, and did not see an association. This suggests that TBIs specifically, rather than general trauma, play a role in developing the disease.

Other studies have suggested that TBIs cause some of the same pathological changes in the brain as those seen in Alzheimer’s disease. About 850,000 people in the UK have dementia and numbers are expected to rise to more than a million by 2025.

The researchers used data held in Danish national registries from 1977 to 2013. Over the 36 years, 132,093 people had at least one diagnosis of traumatic brain injury, with 85 percent being mild. Between 1999 and 2013, 126,734 people aged over 50 were diagnosed with dementia.

Their models took into account factors linked to dementia such as diabetes, heart disease, depression and substance abuse, but they were unable to account for others, including education, smoking and high blood pressure.

Experts said that more research would be needed to tease out which specific types of head injury, such as sports concussion, were implicated.

It is important whatever our age we start to plan for the future. Whether this is considering a Will, Lasting Powers of Attorney, Advance Decision and Advance Statement. Taking such steps are vital to you and your family and friends in trying to ensure your wishes are known and carried out. It is always good to take the first step and talk as to your wishes.

**If you would like a free initial consultation to discuss your situation and options open to you then contact me Chris Berry at:**

Address: Berrys Solicitors  
247 Church Street  
Blackpool  
FY1 3PE  
Phone: 01253 620 022  
Email: [berrys.mail@btconnect.com](mailto:berrys.mail@btconnect.com)  
Website: <http://www.berrys-solicitors.co.uk>  
Solicitor: Christopher Berry Principal

Berrys Solicitors is Authorised and Regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority  
Firm No: 261147