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“Referral Source for Concussion Clinic After Sports-related Traumatic Brain Injury”

Introduction: An estimated 6.6 million pediatric head injuries occur each year nationwide¹, and sports-related injuries in particular are on the rise. Currently, little is known about whether certain populations have difficulty accessing care for sports-related concussions (SRC). Recent trends have shown an increasing amount of Medicaid patients and decreasing amount of privately insured patients presenting to the emergency department (ED)³. Further, patients identifying as white and having private insurance are reportedly seen more in specialized concussion clinics than their counterparts⁴, despite the rates of concussions rising among all socioeconomic classes⁵. We hypothesize that children with Medicaid will be more likely to utilize the ED over their pediatrician's office as their primary encounter after a sports-related traumatic brain injury.

Methods: We performed a retrospective chart review of patients < 18 years who were diagnosed with SRC at our stand-alone children's hospital from January 2007 to December 2022. We performed t-test, chi-square vs Fischer's exact (as deemed appropriate), and univariate and multivariate analyses for referral source.

Results: Of the 710 patients reviewed, 6 were uninsured, 411 were on Medicaid, and 291 were privately insured. Medicaid/uninsured patients were more likely to be referred from the ED than patients with commercial insurance (63.5% vs 39.5%, $p=0.001$).

Conclusions: Medicaid patients are more likely to utilize the ED for concussion care. We plan to implement community, school-based, and parent education to better delineate guidelines for concussion care, with the goal of optimizing resource utilization and improved ease of referral for multidisciplinary follow up care.