



# Graymatters!

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## ABI NEWS AND VIEWS

- **Inside: The OK BI Conference's** new location
- **Inside: NEW** Hövding "Air-Bag" Crash Collar
- **Inside: NEW** Concussion Resource Lead
- **Inside: Brain Injury** in Amateur Sports

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## BCBIA and PCBICS Join as One

It is with great excitement and enthusiasm we announce the joining of two incredible organizations. The BC Brain Injury Association (BCBIA) and the Pacific Coast Brain Injury Conference Society (PCBICS) are joining together to become one group with a focused and clear purpose to support our province's brain injury community. The union of these two organizations was announced in November 2012 at the BCBIA's Gala in Vancouver. The timeline for the merger will take 3-6 months to get the business end of things complete and form a new organization with one board of directors. We have engaged The Governance Group, led by Vince Battistelli to help facilitate the merger and also to lead the new board through a strategic planning process and active board governance development. The strategic planning and governance development process will take us into the spring of 2014.



As a first step in the process, both boards gath-

ered and had a facilitated conversation where both groups shared common visions and reasons for the two organizations coming together. There is considerable enthusiasm for merging the two groups and although the priorities for the newly forming organization are still to be uncovered there is one priority that everyone is very committed to and will be of utmost importance as we move forward;

[www.brainstreams.ca](http://www.brainstreams.ca) is that priority. At this same meeting we formed a "Merger Transition Group" consisting of three members of each of the two board of directors. This group will work closely with The Governance Group team

to complete the merger and liaise with their respective board members

until the new organization is formed and confirmation of the board members is complete. For more info and periodic updates on the process please visit, [www.brainstreams.ca](http://www.brainstreams.ca). \*

- By Patti Flaherty

*As published in Headline Magazine Spring 2013*

## A UBC Brain Research Centre Report

**"Concussions in teenagers more damaging and last longer than previously known"**

Adolescent athletes who experience concussions exhibit changes in their brain for a longer period of time than was previously known, according to new research by **Naznin Virji-Babul** and **Lara Boyd**, both

members of the Brain Research Centre at UBC and Vancouver Coastal Health.

The results were published in the January edition of the journal *Pediatric Neurology*. The Brain Research Centre comprises more than 225 investigators with multidisciplinary expertise in neuroscience research ranging from the test tube, to the bedside, to industrial spin-offs.

The Centre is a partnership of the UBC Faculty of Medicine and VCH Research Institute. \*

For more information, visit [www.brain.ubc.ca](http://www.brain.ubc.ca). @ News Updates



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“Everyday is the perfect day to start a dialogue on brain injury prevention!”...



# Brain Injury In Canadian Amateur Sport: Increasing Awareness

By David J. Wallin  
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**The Issue** - Sports concussions have enjoyed recent public awareness in light of recent media attention due to challenges faced by some noteworthy professional athletes and the corresponding increased concern over the risk of developing long-term mental impairment as a consequence of repeated head trauma through participation in professional sports.

One notable example in the United States is the media attention that has been recently focussed on the thousands of former professional football players that have sued the NFL and its teams, alleging that for many years the NFL did not do enough to protect its players from all too frequent concussions experienced by players during game play.

Does this increase in public awareness of the potentially debilitating and career ending effects of sports concussions in professional sport bode well for an increase in awareness and understanding on how to keep our children safe in Canadian amateur sports?

## Recent Canadian Study of Traumatic Brain Injuries in Amateur Sport

A recent study by neuro-

surgeon and principal researcher, Dr. Michael Cusimano, of St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, found that our beloved game of ice hockey accounts for almost half of all traumatic brain injuries among Canadian children and teens taking part in team sports.

The Cusimano study looked at nearly 13,000 injured Canadian children aged 5 – 19 between the years of 1990 and 2009. The study utilized data obtained from the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP), which tracks visits to emergency rooms at 11 paediatric hospitals and 3 general hospitals across Canada. The study found that more than 80% of children and teens with brain injuries were male, with an average age of 13 years.

Researchers also found that hockey accounted for 44.3% of all brain injuries, with almost 70% of such injuries occurring in children 11 years of age and older, as a result of player-to-player contact, or being hit into the boards by another player.

Soccer ranked second on the list, accounting for 19% of those with a sports-related brain injury. Most of those injured were between the ages of 10 and 19 years of age, with the most common reason being struck by another player, a

kick to the head, or a head-on-head collision. Among players aged 5 to 9, brain injuries occurred most often from striking a surface, or slamming into a goal post. Researchers commented that there is a really straightforward solution to this problem – “padding the goal posts could have potentially prevented a large number of these brain injuries in young children.” Football and rugby ranked relatively lower on the list at 13% and 5.6%, respectively. Being struck by another player, usually in a tackle, was the most likely cause of brain injuries in these sports. The lower ranking of these sports is likely indicative of their lower relative popularity in Canada (when compared to hockey and soccer), rather than being indicative a true reduction in the injury risk potential of these sports.

Researchers are careful to point out parents should not take such studies as a cue to withdraw their children from sports and researchers fully acknowledge the importance of keeping our children active. Researchers insist the take home message for parents and children alike is to encourage play in these sports in the safest way possible with the both the appropriate safety equipment and adult supervision, to ensure that play can proceed in the safest way possible. \*



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## Let us Help.

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