

PRESS RELEASE

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Physical Therapy Plays a Crucial Role in Post-Concussion Treatment

Chester Springs, PA – February 15, 2016 – The critically acclaimed film *Concussion* has brought the subject of concussion into a new light for athletes across the United States. In the public health exposé, Will Smith portrays a Nigerian forensic pathologist who fights the National Football League’s efforts to bury research on the brain damage suffered by its players.

Now that concussion awareness is enjoying its time in the limelight, it’s up to athletes, coaches and parents to recognize the injury’s signs and symptoms and immediately pursue an accurate diagnosis and an appropriate treatment plan. Although concussions can occur in any sport, the high school sports with the highest concussion rates include boys’ football and ice hockey and girls’ soccer and lacrosse. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, reported concussion rates have increased at all levels of sports participation during the last few years. Improved diagnostic strategies and increased disclosure by student athletes contribute, in part, to this phenomenon.

Physical therapists specializing in post-concussion treatment can evaluate and treat this type of traumatic brain injury. A physical therapist begins with a full evaluation and a thorough patient history. Contrary to popular belief, MRIs and CT scans do not detect brain abnormality, even in patients exhibiting concussion symptoms.

“Physical Therapists are a vital part of the post-concussion management team,” said Dr. Michelle Fearheller, MPT, DPT, OCS, CSCS. “As the concussion epidemic grows, Physical Therapists are responsible for educating patients and their families about concussion prevention, concussion management, and return to activity after a concussion”.

Dr. Fearheller, Program Director of the Kinetic Physical Therapy Adolescent Sports Medicine Program, added, “Each athlete should follow a graded return to sports program to appropriately challenge each body system affected by the concussion. Physical Therapists are trained to provide individualized care, managing symptoms and deficits, to enable a full return to all functional and athletic activities.”

A physical therapist asks the patient a series of questions to identify symptoms and performs strength, coordination, balance, sight, smell, hearing, and memory tests to establish a treatment plan. Throughout treatment, the physical therapist frequently repeats the same questions and tests to gauge the patient’s progress and determine a safe return to work, school, athletics, and other activities.

Experts suggest parents initiate open dialogue with their children to build awareness of the signs and symptoms of concussion. Young athletes in particular need to understand the long-term consequences of a concussion so they learn to speak up when exhibiting signs of an injury.

Research suggests that suffering multiple concussions can have a compounding effect. A study appearing in the *American Journal of Sports Medicine* titled “Concussion symptoms and neurocognitive performance of high school and college athletes who incur multiple concussions” drew a connection between multiple concussions and prolonged symptoms, recovery time, and risk for future concussions.

About The Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association

Founded in 1956, the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association champions the success of physical therapist-owned businesses. Our members are leaders and innovators in the health care system. The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) represents more than 85,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and students of physical therapy nationwide. For more information, please visit www.ppsapta.org.

About Kinetic Physical Therapy

Kinetic Physical Therapy is changing the way movement rehabilitation is managed in our community. We take an industry leading, innovative and evidence-based approach to the care of our patients. We strive to be the first call you make for all of your health and wellness needs. From your first encounter, our team will create an environment that is conducive to healing, energetic, and fun. With our highly skilled professionals and vast product line, we will get you moving toward accomplishing your goals.