



For Immediate release

Repercussion Group presses for changes in the Concussion in Sport Group structure and process

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, 24 October 2022 - The Repercussion Group—an international working group of researchers, clinicians, and advocates—has submitted a *position paper* to the co-chairs of the Concussion in Sport Group (CISG) in advance of the 6th International Consensus Conference on Concussion in Sport on October 27-29. While nominally sport-specific, these CISG statements have historically been the internationally recognized document on concussion and paradigm-setting guide for all-cause mild brain injury worldwide. The [Repercussion Group](#) asserts that CISG statements have downplayed the detrimental effects and long-term implications of repetitive head impacts in sport. Further, these statements do not adequately address managing multiple concussions, persistent postconcussive symptoms, or exposure to overall head impact. Nor do they include criteria to help clinicians and patients considering retirement from sport.

The historical shortcomings of CISG statements are also freshly relevant due to the recent plagiarism scandal surrounding former CISG chair and British Journal of Sports Medicine (BJSM) Editor Dr. Paul McCrory. Dr. McCrory has resigned from his position as CISG chair and was removed as an editor of BJSM. BJSM has retracted nine of his publications, including one with a problematic misquotation of a prominent researcher that may have warped perceptions of the risk of concussions and repetitive hits.

The Repercussion Group position paper contends that the upcoming CISG conference must make significant changes in its process and structure—resulting in a more transparent, effective statement. The paper calls for changes in the CISG's organizational structure to 1) include patient and provider perspectives and 2) provide greater transparency regarding the consensus development process and potential conflicts of interest. Overall, the recommendations in the position paper should result in a 6th international consensus statement that provides patient-first (not sport-first) guidelines. These guidelines must include clearly-articulated procedures for managing multiple concussions and persistent post-concussion symptoms.

The 6th consensus statement should also convey all available evidence for any relationship of a causal link between repetitive head impacts and later-in-life neurodegenerative disease. Even without definitive causality, the increasing volume of research on long-term risks makes the



traditional "wait and see" approach no longer ethically tenable. Additionally, the growing visibility of former athletes with cognitive issues and neurodegenerative disease demonstrates the costs of not making a definitive statement on this issue.

The Repercussion Group asks that the CISG process and resulting guidelines reflect the moral, clinical, and scientific realities of patients and players living with the after-effects of mild brain injury.

MEDIA INFORMATION

Interviews

- Dr. Judith Gates, Co-Founder of Head for Change. judith@headforchange.org.uk
- Stephen T. Casper, Clarkson University. scasper@clarkson.edu
- Professor Alice Theadom, Auckland University of Technology.
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- Conor Gormally, Patient Advocate, and Co-Founder, Concussion Alliance.
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Web links

- The Repercussion Group: www.repercussiongroup.com
- 'White' position paper submitted to CISG – available via
www.repercussiongroup.com/white-paper

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