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An evidence-based, multidisciplinary team approach to sports concussion management

Recent studies demonstrate dramatically improved health outcomes when a multidisciplinary care team model is utilized in the treatment of complex medical diagnoses. These studies have focused on improving outcomes in the treatment of chronic conditions such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and congestive heart failure. The multidisciplinary care team model has been shown to reduce medical complications, reduce number of hospital admissions, and improve overall quality of life in patients with these diseases. So strong is the evidence in favour of these models that they have become the standard of care in many medical systems in the United States and around the world. The multidisciplinary care team approach is now being evaluated for application in more acute settings, such as post-operative recovery. Studies confirm that the coordinated efforts, shared knowledge, and ongoing communication of the multidisciplinary care team significantly improve outcomes in these more acute settings as well. Applying the multidisciplinary care team approach in the treatment of sports concussions is as necessary as it is promising. In our model, when an athlete is concussed we immediately assign a Medical Team, a Home Team, and a School Team. Each team is responsible for well-defined aspects of the concussed athlete's treatment, including symptom monitoring, symptom reporting, and treatment. The ultimate goals of this multidisciplinary care team approach to sports concussion treatment are to: reduce concussion symptoms and improve patient comfort; maximize safe and healthy brain recovery and; minimize time away from sports participation.

Biography

Andrew W Gottschalk, MD trained in Sports Medicine at both Mayo Clinic and Cleveland Clinic. His extensive experience includes treating athletes of all levels of competition, including those in the NFL, NBA, MLB, and NCAA Division I. As the Ochsner Health System's Director of Primary Care Sports Medicine, he serves as Head Medical Team Physician for the NBA New Orleans Pelicans. He is also an avid writer; his multiple publication projects include his regular newspaper column, "The Sports Medicine Doctor." He is the current Musculoskeletal Health Editor for the medical journal *Evidence-Based Practice*.

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