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Heading a soccer ball can injure brain

30th November, 2011

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1111/111130-soccer_headers.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1111/111130-soccer_headers.html

New research suggests that soccer players are at risk of brain injury, especially those who head the ball a lot. Researchers in America carried out tests on 38 amateur football players over the age of 30 who had played the sport since childhood. Doctors gave them MRI brain scans and tests to assess their brain function. The players were asked to estimate the number of times they had headed a ball in the past year. The research findings indicate a degree of brain injury not usually present in people who do not play soccer. Doctors reported the condition to be a form of concussion known as mild traumatic brain injury (TBI). This can easily occur in soccer due to the frequent impact of the head with a ball that can travel at speeds close to 100 kph.

Lead author Doctor Michael Lipton explained the effect heading a ball can have on the brain: "Heading a soccer ball is not an impact of a magnitude that will [cut] nerve fibers in the brain, but repetitive heading may set off a cascade of responses that can lead to a degeneration of brain cells." He added: "Brain injury and cognitive impairment can result from heading a soccer ball with high frequency....These are findings that should be taken into consideration in planning future research to develop approaches to protect soccer players." Doctor Lipton concluded it would be difficult to detect brain injury in children as it takes years of heading a ball for the damage to show up in brain scans.

WARM-UPS

1. THE BRAIN: Walk around the class and talk to other students about the brain. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

research / brain injury / amateurs / childhood / findings / traumatic / concussion / impact / magnitude / responses / cognitive / frequency / approaches / concluded

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. SPORTS INJURIES: What are they and how can players avoid them? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Sport	Injuries	How to avoid them
Soccer		
Skiing		
Swimming		
Tennis		
Sumo		
Baseball		

4. SOCCER: Students A **strongly** believe soccer is a dangerous sport; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. BRAIN DAMAGE: Which of these things are worse for your brain? Rank them and share your rankings with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- heading a soccer ball
- smoking
- no exercise
- stress
- watching TV
- lack of sleep
- no reading
- alcohol

6. RISK: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'risk'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1111/111130-soccer_headers.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A report says soccer players are athletes most at risk of brain damage. | T / F |
| b. The study looked at brain scans of players in their twenties. | T / F |
| c. Heading a soccer ball can lead to a condition similar to concussion | T / F |
| d. A soccer ball can reach speeds of 100 kph. | T / F |
| e. The report's main writer headed a ball to show the effects on the brain. | T / F |
| f. Heading a ball cuts the nerve fibers in the brain. | T / F |
| g. A doctor said the study should be used to protect players in the future. | T / F |
| h. It is difficult to detect heading-related brain damage in children. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. suggests | a. damage |
| 2. especially | b. shape |
| 3. assess | c. effect |
| 4. form | d. particularly |
| 5. mild | e. methods |
| 6. impact | f. indicates |
| 7. magnitude | g. find |
| 8. impairment | h. evaluate |
| 9. approaches | i. size |
| 10. detect | j. light |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. soccer players are at risk | a. into consideration |
| 2. Researchers in America carried | b. the head with a ball |
| 3. tests to assess | c. impairment |
| 4. a form of | d. out tests |
| 5. the frequent impact of | e. of responses |
| 6. set off a cascade | f. of brain injury |
| 7. cognitive | g. their brain function |
| 8. findings that should be taken | h. up in brain scans |
| 9. it would be difficult to detect | i. concussion |
| 10. damage to show | j. brain injury |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1111/111130-soccer_headers.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

New research suggests that soccer players are at _____ of brain injury, especially those who head the ball a lot. Researchers in America _____ out tests on 38 amateur football players over the age of 30 who had played the sport since childhood. Doctors gave them MRI brain scans and tests to _____ their brain function. The players were asked to _____ the number of times they had headed a ball in the past year. The research findings indicate a _____ of brain injury not usually present in people who do not play soccer. Doctors reported the condition to be a _____ of concussion known as _____ traumatic brain injury (TBI). This can easily occur in soccer due to the frequent impact of the head with a ball that can travel at speeds _____ to 100 kph.

form
estimate
carried
close
risk
degree
mild
assess

Lead author Doctor Michael Lipton explained the _____ heading a ball can have on the brain: "Heading a soccer ball is not an impact of a _____ that will [cut] _____ fibers in the brain, but repetitive heading may set off a cascade of responses that can lead to a degeneration of brain _____." He added: "Brain injury and cognitive impairment can result from heading a soccer ball with _____ frequency....These are findings that should be taken into consideration in planning future research to _____ approaches to protect soccer players." Doctor Lipton concluded it would be difficult to _____ brain injury in children as it takes years of heading a ball for the

develop
magnitude
show
nerve
high
effect
detect
cells

damage to _____ up in brain scans.

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1111/111130-soccer_headers.html

New research suggests that soccer players _____ injury, especially those who head the ball a lot. Researchers in America carried out _____ football players over the age of 30 who had played the sport since childhood. Doctors gave them MRI brain scans and _____ brain function. The players were asked to estimate the number of times they had headed a ball in the past year. The research findings _____ brain injury not usually present in people who do not play soccer. Doctors reported the condition to be a _____ known as mild traumatic brain injury (TBI). This can easily occur in soccer due to the frequent _____ with a ball that can travel at speeds close to 100 kph.

Lead author Doctor Michael Lipton _____ heading a ball can have on the brain: "Heading a soccer ball is not an impact of a _____ [cut] nerve fibers in the brain, but repetitive heading may set off a cascade of responses _____ degeneration of brain cells." He added: "Brain injury and cognitive impairment can _____ a soccer ball with high frequency....These are findings that should be taken into consideration in planning future _____ approaches to protect soccer players." Doctor Lipton concluded it would be difficult to detect brain injury in children as it takes years of heading a ball for the _____ in brain scans.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1111/111130-soccer_headers.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'brain' and 'damage'.

brain	damage
--------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• risk• 38• tests• degree• form• close	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explained• cut• set• result• protect• show
---	---

STUDENT THE BRAIN SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1111/111130-soccer_headers.html

Write five GOOD questions about the brain in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

THE BRAIN DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'brain'?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) How at risk is the brain in every day life?
- e) Should soccer players wear some kind of helmet?
- f) Do you think research like this makes a problem where there isn't one?
- g) How is your brain functioning today?
- h) Have you noticed soccer players being less cognitively aware than the rest of society?
- i) What other sports put the brain at risk?
- j) What do you think of the idea of sticking your head in front of a ball that is travelling at 100 kph?

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THE BRAIN DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Should heading be banned in soccer?
- c) Do authorities need to look at how children head a soccer ball?
- d) What do you think happens inside the brain when someone heads a ball?
- e) Would these findings make you think twice about letting your children play football?
- f) What things do you think might damage your brain?
- g) What can we do to use more of our brain?
- h) Do you believe in brain training exercises?
- i) What phrases do you know with the word 'brain' in them?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Dr. Lipton?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1111/111130-soccer_headers.html

New research suggests that soccer players are (1) ____ risk of brain injury, especially those who head the ball a lot. Researchers in America carried (2) ____ tests on 38 amateur football players over the age of 30 who had played the sport since childhood. Doctors gave them MRI brain scans and tests to (3) ____ their brain function. The players were asked to estimate the number of times they had headed a ball in the past year. The research (4) ____ indicate a degree of brain injury not usually present in people who do not play soccer. Doctors reported the condition to be a form of concussion known as (5) ____ traumatic brain injury (TBI). This can easily occur in soccer due to the frequent impact of the head with a ball that can travel at speeds (6) ____ to 100 kph.

Lead author Doctor Michael Lipton explained the (7) ____ heading a ball can have on the brain: "Heading a soccer ball is not an impact of a magnitude that will [cut] nerve fibers in the brain, but repetitive heading may (8) ____ off a cascade of responses that can lead to a degeneration of brain cells." He added: "Brain injury and cognitive impairment can (9) ____ from heading a soccer ball with high frequency....These are findings that should be taken (10) ____ consideration in planning future research to develop approaches to protect soccer players." Doctor Lipton concluded it would be difficult to (11) ____ brain injury in children as it takes years of heading a ball for the damage to show (12) ____ in brain scans.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. | (a) as | (b) by | (c) of | (d) at |
| 2. | (a) out | (b) up | (c) over | (d) away |
| 3. | (a) recess | (b) compress | (c) assess | (d) regress |
| 4. | (a) finders | (b) findings | (c) find | (d) founders |
| 5. | (a) spicy | (b) mild | (c) soft | (d) gentle |
| 6. | (a) nearby | (b) between | (c) close | (d) opposite |
| 7. | (a) effect | (b) effective | (c) effectively | (d) effectiveness |
| 8. | (a) get | (b) met | (c) wet | (d) set |
| 9. | (a) answer | (b) grade | (c) question | (d) result |
| 10. | (a) up | (b) into | (c) of | (d) by |
| 11. | (a) detect | (b) digest | (c) defect | (d) dialect |
| 12. | (a) all | (b) via | (c) up | (d) down |

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HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about soccer injuries. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. THE BRAIN: Make a poster about the brain and sport. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. HEADERS: Write a magazine article about heading the ball and brain damage. Include imaginary interviews with people who are worried and those who don't believe the findings in the article.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a brain expert. Ask him/her three questions about the heading a soccer ball and the brain. Give him/her three of your opinions. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. F c. T d. T e. F f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. suggests | a. indicates |
| 2. especially | b. particularly |
| 3. assess | c. evaluate |
| 4. form | d. shape |
| 5. mild | e. light |
| 6. impact | f. effect |
| 7. magnitude | g. size |
| 8. impairment | h. damage |
| 9. approaches | i. methods |
| 10. detect | j. find |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. soccer players are at risk | a. of brain injury |
| 2. Researchers in America carried | b. out tests |
| 3. tests to assess | c. their brain function |
| 4. a form of | d. concussion |
| 5. the frequent impact of | e. the head with a ball |
| 6. set off a cascade | f. of responses |
| 7. cognitive | g. impairment |
| 8. findings that should be taken | h. into consideration |
| 9. it would be difficult to detect | i. brain injury |
| 10. damage to show | j. up in brain scans |

GAP FILL:

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New research suggests that soccer players are at **risk** of brain injury, especially those who head the ball a lot. Researchers in America **carried** out tests on 38 amateur football players over the age of 30 who had played the sport since childhood. Doctors gave them MRI brain scans and tests to **assess** their brain function. The players were asked to **estimate** the number of times they had headed a ball in the past year. The research findings indicate a **degree** of brain injury not usually present in people who do not play soccer. Doctors reported the condition to be a **form** of concussion known as **mild** traumatic brain injury (TBI). This can easily occur in soccer due to the frequent impact of the head with a ball that can travel at speeds **close** to 100 kph.

Lead author Doctor Michael Lipton explained the **effect** heading a ball can have on the brain: "Heading a soccer ball is not an impact of a **magnitude** that will [cut] **nerve** fibers in the brain, but repetitive heading may set off a cascade of responses that can lead to a degeneration of brain **cells**." He added: "Brain injury and cognitive impairment can result from heading a soccer ball with **high** frequency....These are findings that should be taken into consideration in planning future research to **develop** approaches to protect soccer players." Doctor Lipton concluded it would be difficult to **detect** brain injury in children as it takes years of heading a ball for the damage to **show** up in brain scans.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - a 3 - c 4 - b 5 - b 6 - c 7 - a 8 - d 9 - d 10 - b 11 - a 12 - c