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Study Finds that Cognitive Impact can Persist in Young Adults with Concussions

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A new study published in the European Journal of Neuroscience has found that young adults with a history of mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI), or concussions, can experience persistent cognitive changes as well as altered brain activity.

In the study, researchers examined a group of young adults ranging in age from 18 to 24 who had experienced at least two diagnosed concussions, with the most recent one being at least a month prior to testing. This group was evaluated against a control group with no history of diagnosed concussions.

The participants in the study were instructed to switch between two different tasks, which involved telling the difference between colors and shapes. While they completed these tasks, their cognitive changes, like working memory and processing speed were noted, and their brain waves were monitored with an electroencephalogram (EEG), which tests for changes in the brain waves.

The research team looked for differences in three different types of brain waves and their effects on executive function. This involves the ability to control attention, inhibition, performance, flexibility, stability, working memory, and planning.

The study found that participants in the concussion group overall had a lower performance rate during the task-switching exercise. They were less accurate than the control group and processing performance was low.

With this new study, researchers hope that the new findings will help develop better treatment strategies specifically for young concussion patients as they grow older.

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