Retraction: When to retire after concussion?


This article contains inaccuracies which in our view undermine the reliability of the work.

BMJ investigated an inaccurate quotation in this article after a concern was raised to us in an editorial which has been published in British Journal of Sports Medicine.¹ We thank Stephen T Casper, Adam M Finkel for bringing this to our attention.

Dr McCrory purports to quote Thorndike when he writes that after experiencing “three concussions, which involved loss of consciousness for any period of time, the athlete should be removed from contact sports for the remainder of the season.” This passage, which is written in direct quotation marks, is attributed to Thorndike’s 1952 paper. BMJ’s research integrity team and British Journal of Sports Medicine editor-in-chief have reviewed Thorndike’s 1952 article. It does not contain the quotation which McCrory used.

Thorndike did write about management of concussion. However, he makes no reference to exclusion for the remainder of the season. Thorndike wrote: “Patients with cerebral concussion that has recurrent more than three times or with more than momentary loss of consciousness at any one time should not be exposed to further body-contact trauma.” Thorndike repeats his position again in his concluding remarks that: “Body-contact sports should not be permitted for any student athlete who has suffered removal of the spleen or a kidney, or who has suffered three cerebral concussions of moderate degree, or one concussion resulting in the diagnosis of laceration of the brain, or loss of an eye”.

While reviewing the paper BMJ and British Journal of Sports Medicine also noted additional referencing errors in table one.

In view of the nature of the misquotation and based on the pattern of misconduct by McCrory that has recently been discovered we have retracted this article. During 2021 and 2022 there was an investigation by British Journal of Sports Medicine and BMJ which found that some of McCrory’s work was the product of publication misconduct. British Journal of Sports Medicine published a summary of the investigation.²

References

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