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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2011). *Newsroom*. 1109.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/1109>

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Georgia Southern University Researchers Awarded Nearly \$400,000 by National Institutes of Health to Study Concussions

JUNE 14, 2011

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Georgia Southern University researchers have been awarded a \$385,000 grant by the National Institutes of Health to study the immediate and long-term effects of concussions. The research will help treat student athletes who suffer the head injury.

“Our goal is to help determine how long the effects of a concussion persist,” said Georgia Southern College of Health and Human Sciences faculty member Thomas Buckley, Ed.D. “If a person returns to risky activity while still suffering the effects of a concussion they are more likely to suffer another concussion, which will likely be worse and could potentially even be fatal. We hope that this research leads to a better understanding of how long a person needs in order to fully recover before engaging in activity that could put them at risk for another head injury.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there are 1.6 – 3.8 million concussions annually in the United States which occur during sports and recreation activities, and recent studies show that 15 percent of U.S. soldiers experienced some type of head trauma while serving in Iraq. Previously, Buckley and his team have worked with the U.S. Army to track how a person’s movements change after a concussion.

“Once a person suffers a concussion they are more likely to suffer a second and then third concussion, and we now believe that multiple concussions may be linked to long-term brain problems such as dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, and maybe even Lou Gehrig’s disease,” said

Buckley. "We hope this research leads to a better understanding of the recovery process following a concussion so we can reduce these serious long term consequences. Concussions are an unfortunate risk of playing sports, but our goal is to help prevent repeated concussions and the associated short and long term risks from multiple concussions. Parents of young athletes also need to be aware of the dangers and implications of head trauma." The research will also provide important information to coaches, athletic trainers and doctors who deal with concussions in athletes.

In addition to Buckley, Georgia Southern faculty members Barry Munkasy, Ph.D., Laura Gunn, Ph.D., George Shaver, Psy.D. and Brandy Close, M.S., are participating in the research. The Georgia Southern University research team is collaborating with University of North Carolina-Charlotte faculty member Erik Wilkstrom, Ph.D.

Buckley and his research team of students from the University's Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies have been working on concussion research for nearly three years. "This National Institutes of Health grant will help Dr. Buckley's team continue research that could impact thousands of lives and lead to a better understanding of a common injury that puts people at risk every day," said Charles Patterson, Georgia Southern's Vice President for Research and Dean of the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies. "This research is a great example of how faculty members and students are working every day to engage in meaningful research that will improve the lives and health of people worldwide."

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"O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree..." 🎄🎵#TBT to circa 1964, when a tree in front of the Williams Center was decorated for the holidays.



12h

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