On the Brain

Football and the Brain

Lifestyle Impacts Health

There is growing evidence linking football and brain disease. These findings not only affect the health and well-being of professional players and their families, they have also left parents questioning whether they should prohibit their children from playing football and other contact sports.

Enter the Football Players Health Study at Harvard University, the largest and most comprehensive study of living former players, with more than 3,700 participants to date. Together, Harvard researchers are focusing on overall player health, including prevention, diagnostic, and treatment strategies for the most common and severe conditions affecting professional football players.

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Faculty First Person

A conversation with Isaac Chiu, AB ’02, PhD ’09

Our body is home to trillions of microorganisms, most of which live in our gut. Many of these microbes are “good bacteria,” species that stimulate a healthy immune system, or help to outcompete “bad” bacteria that can cause disease. Emerging data indicate that this gut “microbiome” sends signals to the brain, and that these signals can regulate many aspects of nervous system function, behavior, and even our response to injury.

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In the News

A Choice Collaboration

New research from HMS reveals contrasts in how groups of neurons in different regions of the brain function during decision-making. These findings shed light on potential neural mechanisms involved in working memory and decision-making. Read more »

Decoding Brain Evolution

The new Allen Discovery Center for Human Brain Evolution at Boston Children’s Hospital and HMS aims to catalogue the key genes required for human brain evolution, analyze their roles in human behavior and cognition, and study their functions to discover evolutionary mechanisms. Read more »

The Hunger Gates

Scientists at HMS and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center have identified a pathway by which neurons that drive hunger influence distant neurons involved in the decision of whether or not to react to food-related cues. Read more »