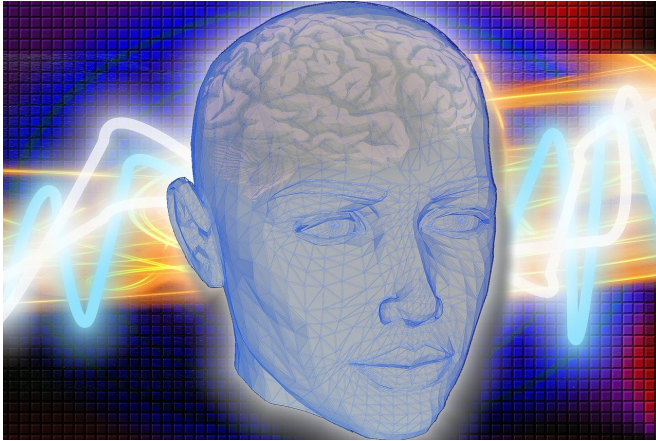


Researchers report on head injuries in MMA

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Mixed martial arts (MMA) has gained global popularity over recent years. Yet it remains a sport with a high risk of injury in general, and head injuries in specific.

A new study, published in *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*, explored the patterns and trends of [head injuries](#) in the leading MMA promotion "Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)" between 2016 and 2019.

Researchers used data from match scorecards and ringside physician reports. In addition, they conducted a play-by-play video analysis of the fights to determine the number of significant head injuries sustained by the athlete, the position by which a head injury was sustained, and the opponent's body part that caused the head injury.

"Head injuries constituted 35% of all injuries in MMA. The average fighting time endured by a fighter who sustained a head injury was nine minutes and 49 seconds, during which an average of 32 significant head strikes were absorbed" said lead author on the study Mohamad Y. Fares, University of Glasgow.

The study reports that traumatic brain injuries (TBI) were the most common type of head injury (16%). Males had a head injury rate than females. Knockout was the type of finish with the highest rate of head injuries.

As for weight divisions, "head injury rates showed an [increasing trend](#) as the weight of the fighters increased. That was attributed to greater strengths and knockout power among heavier fighters, and subsequently, a higher chance of injury" said Fares.

Despite the increasing popularity of MMA, [health risks](#) implicated by its combatant nature remain prominent. "Future research is needed to help improve our understanding of the biomechanics and mechanisms that govern head injuries in this sport, in an aim to extrapolate better protective strategies and ensure fighter safety," Fares said.

More information: Fares et al., Craniofacial and traumatic brain injuries in mixed martial arts. *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* (2020). [DOI: 10.1080/00913847.2020.1847623](https://doi.org/10.1080/00913847.2020.1847623)

Provided by University of Glasgow

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