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COM 205

Health PR Campaign

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“Use Your Head and Protect Your Head!”

**1. Background:**

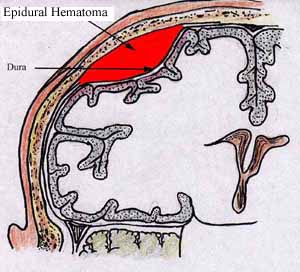
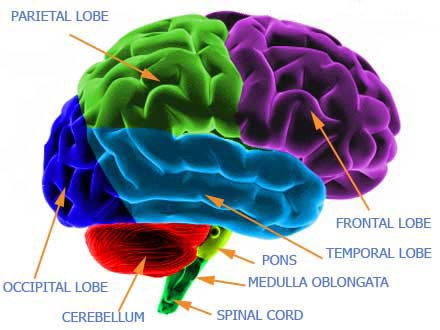
Twelve years ago I went through something that most nine-year-old girls should not have to experience. An innocent trip to the driving range to practice my golfing skills took an unexpected and drastic turn. I was struck in the forehead with a driver golf club and from that moment, the seriousness of head injuries would play a conscious role in my life.

After I was hit in the forehead, I never lost consciousness, I was always aware of my surroundings, and I knew who I was. My parents drove me to the emergency room where I waited hours until someone would see me. A CT scan was taken and it came back negative; however, I was kept overnight for observation. Sunday, the next day, was a good day for me; however, on Monday, suspicions arose. Nurses had a harder time waking me up to complete neuro exams and I could never answer questions completely; I would drift off during mid-sentence. My mother said to the doctors and nurses that I was not acting like myself, so a second CT scan was ordered.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Weiner, the neurosurgeon, rushed into my room and said that I had to have immediate brain surgery. I had what is called an epidural hematoma: An epidural hemorrhage is bleeding between the inside of the skull and the outer covering of the brain. Dr. Weiner had fifteen minutes to operate, or else I would have fallen into a coma. Figure 1.1 shows a representation of an epidural hematoma and a diagram of the human brain. The surgery lasted around three hours, and Dr. Weiner elevated the bone that was fractured and evacuated the blood clot. Three titanium plates and eleven screws were used to put everything back into place. I was kept in the Intensive Care Unit for a few days and by the end of the week, I was released from the hospital.

The one year recovery process consisted of half-days of schools, no gym classes or recess, and the overall precaution of protecting my head. Through this event, the prime item to remember is to seek attention immediately and make sure that any change is reported.

**Figure 1.1**



Traumatic Brain Injury is defined as a blow or jolt to the head, penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. There are two types of head injuries which are mostly associated with traumatic brain injuries: a concussion is a traumatic injury to tissues of the body, such as the brain, as a result of a violent blow, shaking, or spinning, and a coma is a state of unconsciousness. Every fifteen seconds, someone in the United States suffers a traumatic brain injury (TBI). TBI is a contributing factor to a third of all injury-related deaths in the United States. It is surreal to fathom that brain injuries occur more frequently than breast cancer and AIDS patients; about 1/50 Americans are currently living with disabilities from TBI. See Figure 1.2 to see a comprehensive list of statistics revolving around TBI and other serious head trauma.

**Figure 1.2**

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| --- |
| * Of the 1.7 million people who sustain a TBI each year in the U.S., 52,000 people die and 275,000 people are hospitalized * Each year, U.S. Emergency Room departments treat an estimated 173,285 sports and recreation-related TBIs from birth to 19 years of age * During the last decade, ER visits for sport related TBIs among children increased by 60% * From 2001-2009, TBI related ER visits increased from 153,375 to 248,418 * Highest rates of TBI are among males, ages 10-19 * The estimated cost of TBI in 2010 was approximately $76.5 billion |

The leading cause of death from sports-related injuries is traumatic brain injury (TBI) and twenty-one percent of all TBIs are among American children and adolescents. Approximately 2/5 TBIs among children are associated with participation in sports and recreational activities. Serious sports head injuries can be categorized into two divisions: Sports concussion- concussions may appear mild, but research is finding that repeated concussions can have serious, long-term effects and an Epidural Hematoma- is bleeding between the skull and the brain that may occur when an impact causes a blood clot to form between the skull and the brain’s protective covering called the dura. The signs of serious head injuries do not always appear immediately; sometimes they gradually surface later, and this explains the extreme importance of treating any strike to the head immediately. Figure 1.3 details the symptoms and signs of potential TBIs.

**Figure 1.3**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Early Symptoms | Late Symptoms |
| * Confusion * Disorientation * Memory loss * Unconsciousness * Unequal pupil size * Headache * Dizziness * Nausea | * Memory disturbances * Sleep disturbances * Poor concentration * Fatigue * Irritability * Personality changes |

As stated previously, sport related activities are the main contributors to traumatic brain injuries. The greatest number of TBI related emergency room visits include: bicycling, football, playground activities, basketball, and soccer. Children from birth to the age of nineteen have the highest rates of TBI among sport activities, but the highest rates are among males’ ages 10-19 years. Figure 1.4 displays the top ten sports related head injury categories among children ages 14 and younger.

**Figure 1.4**

The best cure for brain injury is prevention. Our brains are not designed to travel at speeds above sixty miles per hours, even in a car. While the skull and the protective mechanisms around the brain do a sufficient job of protecting individuals from particular forces, evolution hasn’t had time to adapt to the acceleration forces involved in motor vehicle accidents. Safety equipment prevents injuries and the most common piece of sports safety gear is a helmet. Wearing a properly fitted helmet is one of the most importance pieces of safety gear that an athlete can wear. Helmets assist in the absorption of shock during impact to the head, cushion the skull, and reduce any jamming of the brain against the skull during impact.

**2. Situational Analysis:**

After reviewing the research, it is quite clear that traumatic head injuries are a major consequence of adolescent children and teens who part-take in sport-related activities. Approximately two out of five TBIs among children are associated with participation in sports and other recreational activities with children ages five to eighteen years of age being highly susceptible to injury. On average, from birth to fourteen years of age, TBI results in an estimated 2,685 deaths and 37,000 hospitalizations every year. It is apparent that these numbers must be reduced drastically to protect the well-being of our youth. A challenge which must be thought through during this campaign is the issue of bringing awareness to two separate target groups: parents and children. Each target group has different outlooks and opinions on the situation, thus the campaign must be coherent enough to reach both of these groups through specific strategies and tactics. Additionally, the possibilities of sustaining a TBI from sporting events are endless; there are multiple situations where children could become injured when playing a sport or recreational activity. Through this campaign, advocators will have to present in broad terms by first, advocating the importance of wearing a helmet, and second, supporting the concept of making children think before they complete a certain series of actions that may inflict harm. In these types of sporting events, children, and parents alike, must be aware of their surroundings to be cognitively aware of what is transpiring to ensure the safety of everyone around. Based on the research gathered, there is a great opportunity to increase awareness about the seriousness of TBIs. By illustrating the importance of head injury trauma and prevention, children will not only be protecting themselves, but also those around them who may be in harm’s way. There is great opportunity to bring a spotlight to this major unfortunate occurrence, and with the use of personal stories and solid facts, hopefully the number of sport-related head injuries will gradually decrease.

It is no surprise that teens and young adults are difficult when it comes to telling them what behaviors and actions to engage in. These individuals want to appear “cool” when it comes to impressing their friends and chances are that wearing a plastic headpiece on their pristine hair is not the best fashion statement in their minds. However, that piece of plastic or valuable knowledge when it comes to playing sports or recreational activities is the best accessory one could have to give individuals the best chance to live a safe and healthy life. This target audience is notorious for being rebellious, but through the proper campaign strategies, teens and young adults will think twice before engaging in athletic activity and take the necessary precautions to prevent head trauma and injuries.

**3. Core Problem/Opportunity:** Serious head trauma is highly relevant amongst adolescents who participate in sporting events or sport-related recreational activities, and these individuals must be cognizant of the extreme seriousness of trauma head injuries in order to prevent the increase of head trauma.

**4. Goal:** The “Use Your Head” campaign’s goal is to increase awareness about the seriousness of head injuries when it comes to athletic activity and decrease the number of emergency room visits that are TBI related.

**5. Objectives:**

* Create promotional videos spotlighting young individuals who have been affected by head injuries (Testimonials)
* Create videos highlighting the medical/health complications of head trauma
* Establish stimulation labs to illustrate the impact injuries can have on the head and brain
* Construct informational pamphlets and brochures to distribute to classrooms across the country to adolescents
* Increase helmet sales by 10% nationally
* Decrease the number of emergency room visits recorded across the country through the first three months of the year by 15%
* Team up with The Brain Injury Association of America and raise $75,000 to purchase helmets and other protective gear to donate to youth sports teams
* Gather statistic information and present it to the federal government to advocate the importance of national recognition

**6. Key Publics:**

* **Adolescents**

1.) Males and females ages seven to fourteen

2.) We want to target this specific group at a young age to illustrate the importance of practicing safe head protection while participating in sport activities. If we expose this factual information to younger children at this age, hopefully they will be equipped with the right information and precautions they can carry with them as they grow older.

3.) At this time, there isn’t much of a solid relationship with this target audience and this can be seen through the statistics that younger children are admitted into emergency rooms for traumatic brain injuries.

4.) Parties that can influence the adolescent target group can be parents, adult leaders such as teachers and coaches, and role models. If these third parties advocate the importance of wearing protective head gear, the goal is to have adolescents mirror those behaviors.

5.) This public will help achieve creating promotional videos because perhaps some of these adolescents have been affected by TBI and a testimonial video could record these first-hand experiences. Also, with the simulation labs, adolescents could explore the inner-workings of the lab and receive hands-on experience of what may happen if an individual suffers from TBI. The adolescents can also help accomplish the objective of decreasing the number of emergency room related TBI accidents.

* **Parents**

1.) The parent demographic would be males and females over the age of 25 who may have an adolescent or young child.

2.) We want to target this specific public because parents of young children and young adults can express the extreme importance of practicing safety techniques when competing in sports, and they can also demand that their child wear a helmet or protective gear. If parents are aware of the seriousness of TBI, hopefully they will relay this information to their children in a stern matter, and hopefully their children will listen.

3.) The current relationship with parents and the TBI prevention issue isn’t that strong because if parents were strongly advocating the importance of wearing a helmet or protective gear during a sporting event, one would think that the number of emergency room visits related to TBI wouldn’t be so astronomical. Of course, parents want the best for their children and perhaps they are making sure that their children wear helmets, but apparently a firm stance hasn’t been taken.

4.) Third parties that can influence the parent target group can be medical professionals and physicians who specialize in head injury traumas. If the right amount of statistics and graphical information is presented by these specialists, the safety of a parent’s child might be put into perspective and parents may be more adamant in the utilization of protective gear with their children.

5.) This particular public will help me achieve creating promotional videos because parents of children affected by TBI can speak about their troubles and experiences and bring awareness to this serious topic. Additionally, parents might be determined to buy helmets for their whole family once hearing information, thus they are helping increase the percentage of sales for helmets. Also, this public can help reduce the number of emergency room visits related to TBI if they help protect their children by telling them to be more cautious when participating in sports. Lastly, if parents feel motivated enough, they can donate money to the Brain Injury Association of America and help raise awareness and financial funds to this worthy cause.

* **Young Adults**

1.) Males and females ages 15-24.

2.) Similar to the adolescent age group, young adults are also more susceptible to TBI since they become more involved in sports or sports-related activities, and they become more competitive and aggressive, which can lead to unfortunate injuries. This campaign is motivated to explain the importance of wearing protective head gear to this target public, which will hopefully stay with them as they grow older and perhaps they can pass this vital information down to their own children.

3.) While the statistics of injuries are not as high in this target public as adolescents, young adults still post high marks of frequenting the emergency room for TBIs. One would hope that with this age comes knowledge and responsibility; however, the current status of this target public and the TBI issue is not as strong as many would like it to be.

4.) Parties that can influence this target group can be parents and additionally, TBI specialists would report the raw facts of the seriousness of suffering from a TBI. Moreover, adolescents or even other young adults can have influence because a story might be shared about young children suffering from TBI, and young adults may think twice before participating in a sport without wearing protective equipment.

5.) The young adult target public could help with the creation of promotional videos because they perhaps have had experiences and they could speak their testimony. Also, young adults could watch these informative videos and participate in the different simulation labs. Furthermore, if young adults would buy their own helmets, this would help increase the number of helmet sales and hopefully decrease the number of emergency room visits related to TBI.

* **Federal Government**

1.) Males or females who hold a position within the federal government of the United States.

2.) The campaign would like to target members of the federal government who can help bring about national recognition to the severity of TBI. With the federal government bringing about national recognition and coverage, individuals, specifically our other target groups, might take more precautions to help prevent future accidents dealing with head trauma. These government officials could even pass bills that make it mandatory for certain athletes, either professionally or recreationally, to wear protective gear and helmets. Additionally, the campaign would like to receive funding from the federal government to continue to build the campaign of promoting awareness.

3.) This campaign has a fairly stable relationship with the federal government. The importance of advocating TBI certainly has a voice on Capitol Hill and TBI awareness days have even been held on the Capitol lawn. There are also some laws that have been passed mandating the use of protective head gear, but there are plenty opportunities to strengthen the relationship with government officials.

4.) Third party officials that could influence the officials of the federal government are adolescents, young adults, parents, and medical professionals who all support the cause of advocating the use of wearing helmets and protective equipment. From testimonials to statistical evidence from physicians, the federal government could be greatly influenced by these third party members.

5.) With the assistance from the federal government, this campaign could help fund the initiative to raise money for youth sports teams to purchase protective equipment and gear. These government officials could also help the campaign gain national recognition and help pass specific laws that mandate helmets and other gear be worn when participating in athletic or sports-related recreational activities.

* **Family Doctors/Pediatricians**

1.) Males and females who practice as family physicians or pediatricians

2.) Our campaign assumes this target public understands the seriousness of TBI and they explain the importance of being smart athletes and simply being careful when participating in specific activities. This campaign can act as another reminder to be sure to express the consequences of TBI to patients and families and explain the great importance of taking precaution and wear helmets or other safety gear.

3.) This safety and prevention campaign has a strong relationship with this target public specifically because they understand the seriousness and complications of TBI. Targeting this particular public would continue to strengthen the relationship with the campaign’s focus.

4.) Third party groups that can influence family doctors and pediatricians can include their patients and families and the federal government. If a pediatrician has a patient who suffered from a traumatic brain injury, he or she would be deeply affected and he or she would, hopefully, do everything to help the patient recover. Additionally, if the federal government provides funding in the effort to bring awareness about the issue, doctors might be willing to work with the government and collaborate together.

5.) Medical professionals could lend their expertise and advice to the creation of promotional videos that illustrate what happens to the brain if a traumatic injury is sustained. They can also provide information and statistics that would be printed in informational brochures and pamphlets that could be distributed in their offices. Additionally, they could gather statistics which could be presented to the Federal Government, which may lead to a greater representation on Capitol Hill.

**Messages:**

**Adolescents:**

* **Primary Messages:**

1. “Use your head and protect your head!”
2. “Don’t blow your chances by taking a blow to the head.”
3. “Helmets are simple, cheap, and life savers! What more could you need?”
4. “Helmets = the ultimate fashion accessory.”

* **Secondary Messages:**

1. Sports and recreational activities contribute to 21% of all TBI among American children and adolescents.

2. Every 15 seconds, someone in the U.S suffers a TBI.

3. The greatest number of TBI-related emergency room visits include bicycling, football, playground activities, basketball and soccer.

4. The most common piece of sport safety gear is a helmet.

**Parents:**

* **Primary Messages:**

1. “To ensure a healthy and safe future for your children, buy them the best present ever: a safety helmet.”

2. “To see your son or daughter score another game winning point, be sure to surround them with love and protective gear.”

3. “The signs of brain injury don’t usually appear immediately. Take precaution and act fast!”

* **Secondary Messages:**

1. The leading cause of death from sports-related injuries is traumatic brain injury.

2. Brain injuries occur more frequently than breast cancer and AIDS patients.

3. TBI is a contributing factor to a 3rd of all injury-related deaths in the U.S.

4. During the last decade, emergency room visits for sports and recreation related TBIs among children and adolescents increased by 60%.

5. The signs of brain injury do not appear immediately .

6. Early symptoms of a concussion include: confusion, memory loss, headache, dizziness, and nausea.

7. Late symptoms of a concussion include: memory disturbances, poor concentration, irritability, and personality changes.

**Young Adults**

* **Primary Messages:**

1. “Use your head to protect your head!”

2. “A helmet is the ultimate fashion accessory.”

3. “No rookies’ return to play is worth the risk.”

4. “Organ Donor: A person who doesn’t wear a helmet.”

5. “Protect your creative juices and wear a helmet.”

* **Secondary Messages:**

1. Every 15 seconds someone in the U.S. suffers from a TBI.

2. Potential effects of severe TBI include: extended period of consciousness, long term issues affecting cognitive function, motor function, and emotion.

3. Children and teens are more likely to suffer from a TBI and take longer to recover than adults.

4. Each year, U.S emergency room departments treat an estimated 173,285 sports and recreational-related TBIs from birth to 19 years of age.

5. The greatest number of TBI related emergency room visits included: bicycling, football, playground activities, basketball, and soccer.

6. Approximately 2 out of 5 TBI among children are associated with participation in sports and recreational activities.

7. The signs of a serious head injury do not occur immediately.

8. The most common piece of sports safety gear is a helmet.

**Federal Government:**

* **Primary Messages:**

1. “Use your heads and protect our youth!”

2. “Help make America’s youth the most fashionable on the sports field.”

3. “Protect the future of America’s youth and make a difference.”

* **Secondary Messages:**

1. Every 15 seconds, someone in the U.S. suffers a TBI.

2. TBI is a contributing factor to a 3rd of all injury-related deaths in the U.S.

3. The estimated economic cost of TBI in 2010, including direct and indirect medical costs, is estimated to be $76.5 billion.

4. During the last decade, emergency room visits for sports and recreational-related TBIs among children increased by 60%.

5. From 2001-2009, TBI related emergency room visits increased from 153,375 – 248,418.

6. The most common pieces of sports protective gear is a helmet.

**Family Doctors/Pediatricians**

* **Primary Messages:**

1. “Protect your patients and support head injury prevention.”

2. “Talk to your patients. Tell them to buy a helmet.”

3. “What’s the best medical advice you can give? Tell your patients to use their head.”

4. “Practice your best medicine and protect your patient’s creative thoughts!”

* **Secondary Messages:**

1. TBI is a contributing factor to a 3rd of all injury-related deaths in the U.S.

2. Of the 1.7 million people who sustain a TBI each year in the U.S., 52,000 people die and 275,000 are hospitalized.

3. During the last decade, emergency room visits for sports and recreational-related TBIs among children and adolescents increased by 60%.

4. Early symptoms of concussions include: disorientation, memory loss, unconsciousness, headache, dizziness, and nausea.

5. Late symptoms of a concussion include: memory and sleep disturbances, poor concentration, fatigue, and personality changes.

6. Among children ages 0-14, TBI results in an estimated 2,685 deaths, 37,000 hospitalizations, and 435,000 emergency room visits.

**Strategies:**

**Adolescents and Young Adults**

* **Strategy:** Create, organize, and implement school wide programs/assemblies, which are interactive to teach adolescents and young adults the importance of head safety and protection.
* **Tactics:**

-Create colorful and eye-catching brochures and pamphlets to pass out in students’ homerooms at school.

-Advertise the “Use your Head and Protect your Head” assembly through posters that would be placed in local businesses and restaurants and send home informational sheets with students.

-Construct testimonial videos to use at the informational assemblies.

-Develop mobile simulation labs that students will have access to during the assembly.

-Compose informational packets for students to take after attending the assembly. These packets will hopefully be read by the students and then students will take them home to share with their parents.

* **Strategy:** Hold safety exhibitions at cities around the United States for adolescents and young adults to ride bikes and play sports using the latest safety equipment.
* **Tactics:**

-Advertise the deals of the event through local television, radio, and newspaper outlets.

-Utilize social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, to advertise the event and “invite” individuals

-Set-up multiple stations that the exhibition for students to part-take in. These stations can include: bicycling, football, skateboarding, and basketball.

-Have participants test out the latest protective gear and helmets.

-Hold raffles and other contests for participants to have a chance to win a helmet.

-Have local businesses and restaurants donate prizes and other incentives to encourage more adolescents and young adults to attend the event.

**Parents**

* **Strategy:** Hold informational meetings at local convention/community centers or hospital centers.
* **Tactics:**

-Advertise to parents through local television stations, radio stations, and newspapers.

-Distribute information sheet to children at school to take home to their parents.

-Create eye-catching posters to hang in local businesses and restaurants.

-Contact local businesses and restaurants to donate door-prizes to entice parents to attend the event.

-Use the testimonial videos to show at the informational meeting.

-Have medical professionals, who specialize in head trauma, come and speak to parents.

-Bring the mobile simulation labs to illustrate to impact of TBI on youth and young adults.

**Federal Government**

* **Strategy:** Write a bill that illustrates the necessity to bring about requirements to have professional and collegiate athletes wear certified, protective gear during all practices and games.
* **Tactics:**

-Form a focus group of people who are well-versed and knowledgeable on traumatic brain injuries and its effects.

-Gather informational statistics from medical professionals to include in the bill proposal.

-Orchestrate a team of individual to read through the bill and edit the information written.

* **Strategy:** Write another bill that makes it a law for adolescents and young adults (ages 3-18 years) to wear a helmet while riding a tricycle/ bicycle or any other type of motorized-recreational vehicle.
* **Tactics:**

-Develop a focus group of people who are knowledgeable on the importance of wearing helmets while riding bikes and other motorized-recreational vehicles.

-Orchestrate a team of individuals to read through the bill and edit the information written.

* **Strategy:** Organize a nationwide a walk: “Use Your Head and Walk!” Similar to the Susan Komen Breast Cancer walk, individuals across the country will gather at various parks to walk and bring awareness to brain trauma and head injury prevention.
* **Tactics:**

-Advertise the event through national outlets such as major cable networks (ABC, NBC, CBS).

-Create Facebook and Twitter accounts to advertise the event and “invite friends.”

-Have Liam Neesom (Natasha Richardson’s wife, an actress, who died from a head injury while skiing) speak on television talk shows and major radio stations about the importance of attending the event and supporting the cause.

-Contact local restaurants to donate coffee, water, donuts, granola bars, fruit, etc. to feed participants of the walk.

-Have television, radio, and newspaper outlets attend the different walks across the country to provide national coverage, which will bring about additional recognition and awareness.

**Family Doctors and Pediatricians**

* **Strategy:** Distribute informational sheets and brochures for doctors to put on display in their offices.
* **Tactics:**

-Gather facts from professionals to create the informational sheets.

-Have a focus group of individuals edit the sheets and brochures and design the layout of the print mediums.

* **Strategy:** Design promotional and testimonial videos to have running on television screens in doctor offices.
* **Tactics:**

-Contact individuals who have suffered from TBI, along with their families, and interview them on camera to construct the videos.

-Interview medical professionals who specialize in traumatic brain injuries.

-Hire videographers to edit the video footage (text, graphics, layout, etc.)

**Budget: See attached excel sheets**

Through the implementation of this public relations proposal, the “Use Your Head and Protect Your Head!” campaign will be extremely successful over the nation as a whole. Beginning at the local level, children, young adults, and parents will be educated about the importance of head safety and they will be aware of the serious effects of traumatic brain injuries. Then, branching out from the local level, states, and eventually the entire nation will be on board to advocate the importance of preventing TBI in any age category. Through national television commercials, national newspaper advertisements, and national promotional walks, the hope is that the entire nation will gain exposure to the healthcare issue and hopefully think twice before engaging in athletic, physical activity without wearing the proper safety equipment and gear. Many of the promotional and advertising strategies and tactics cost quite a sum of money and all of these budget numbers are estimated projections, and many of the times, sponsor credit is being counted on. Hopefully, because of the steep seriousness of this cause, multiple sponsors will be willing to donate their time, services, and products to help protect the health of our youth. The “Use Your Head and Protect Your Head!” campaign is strongly committed to making a difference on a local, state, and national level to address the importance of head safety and trauma, and decrease the number of traumatic brain injuries.

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