

Mapping Evidence on Facial Protection and Injury in Ice Hockey

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Academic Research Project



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INTRODUCTION

- Head and facial injuries are common and can lead to significant morbidity, time lost from play, and financial costs to players and teams.
- Levels of protection differ widely across leagues — *NHL, NCAA, OUA, and other semi-professional organizations* each have distinct visor or cage requirements.
- Player comfort, tradition, and perceptions of toughness influence adoption and compliance with facial protection policies.





A PLAYER'S PATH



Pronger's injury spurs visor debate in NHL

The Associated Press · Posted: Oct 26, 2011 5:57 PM EDT | Last Updated: October 26, 2011



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Estimated 7 minutes



9.7 Visors – Beginning with the 2013-2014 season, all players who have fewer than 25 games of NHL experience must wear a visor properly affixed to their helmet. Visors are to be affixed to the helmets in such a fashion as to ensure adequate eye protection.



Chris Pronger of the Philadelphia Flyers falls to the ice after being hit in the face by a stick during the game against the Toronto Maple Leafs on Monday in Philadelphia. (Bruce Bennett/Getty Images)



PROJECT OVERVIEW

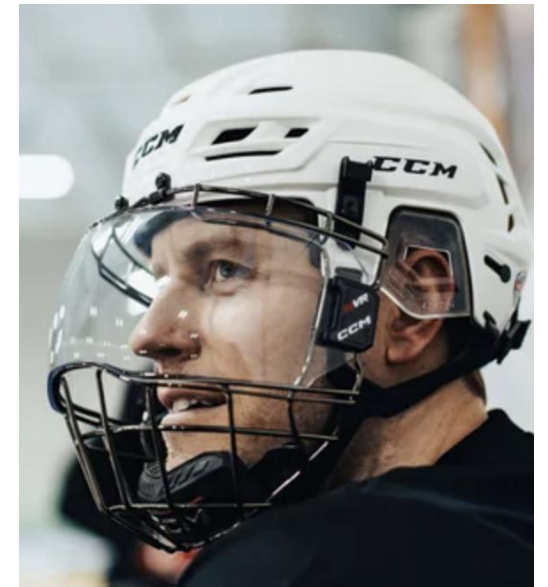
Q: What evidence exists on the relationship between facial protection and facial or head injuries among ice hockey players across different competitive leagues?

Study type: Scoping review

Population: Ice hockey players across all competitive levels and leagues

Concept: League policy on facial protection and its relationship to facial/head injury

Context: Organized ice hockey settings (university, semi-professional, and professional leagues)





PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Author (Year)	League	Conclusions
Stuart et al.,(2002)	Junior A (USA)	Full cages ↓ face and eye injuries vs. half/no visors
Benson et al., (1999)	Canadian university players	Full face shields ↓ facial & dental injuries; no ↑ in concussion or neck injuries
Bunn (2008)	East Coast Hockey League	Although half visors ↓ injury severity vs no visor, they may not adequately protect the upper face
Asplund et al., (2009)	NHL / Collegiate / Junior	Full protection ↓ facial injuries; no ↑ in concussion risk
Stevens et al., (2006)	NHL	Players with visors ↓ facial injuries, no effect on concussion
Pradeep et al., (2021)	NHL	Post-2013 mandatory visor rule leads to ↓ eye injuries



FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION

Future direction:

- ✓ OUA multi-center prospective study
- ✓ Use data from athlete medical visits and injury surveillance systems.
- ✓ Aim: Identify real-world protective effect and guide evidence-informed policy.

Broader implications:

- ✓ Policies in elite and university hockey shape youth equipment standards.
- ✓ Evidence from older athletes can guide pediatric recommendations early in development.
- ✓ Reinforces principles of primary prevention and lifelong participation.



A group of ice hockey players in blue and red jerseys are huddled together on an ice rink. The players are wearing helmets and some are holding hockey sticks. The scene is captured from a slightly elevated angle, showing the players' heads and shoulders. The background is a blurred ice rink with some structural elements of the arena.

THANK YOU