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# Perceptions on the Implementation of a Concussion Passport in Organized Sport

## Executive summary

Prepared for Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH)

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**Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français**

This public opinion research report presents the results of an online survey conducted by Léger Marketing Inc. on behalf of the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) (Sport Canada). The qualitative research study was conducted between March 7 and March 31, 2022.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre *Perceptions de la mise en œuvre d'un passeport pour les commotions cérébrales dans le sport organisé.*

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# Executive Summary

Léger Marketing Inc. (Léger) is pleased to present PCH (Sport Canada) with this report on findings from a qualitative research designed to learn about Perceptions on the Implementation of a Concussion Passport in Organized Sport among youth playing an organized sport, parents who have kids playing an organized sport, adults playing organized sports, and subject matter experts. This report was prepared by Léger Marketing Inc. who was contracted by PCH (Sport Canada) (contract number C1111-210393/001/CY awarded January 28, 2022).

## 1.1 Background and Objectives

For some years now, the different levels of government (federal, provincial, and territorial) have implemented a common approach to protect participants in organized sports activities from concussions and their consequences. To this end, a surveillance system to share information about the incidence and treatment of concussions has been discussed but not introduced yet. One way identified to achieve this end goal would be to establish an individual passport identifying the number, follow-ups, and context of concussions that a participant has suffered. All participants would provide this information to their clubs, associations, and sports federations at the time of registration.

Most recently, a survey conducted by PCH (Sport Canada) provided data on the idea of a concussion passport in organized sports. The majority of the survey participants said "yes" when asked if they would be willing to share their concussion medical history with coaches and sport organizations.

As stated, qualitative data was needed to gain a fuller understanding of the Canadian public's perceived value, benefits, interest, and concerns on the implementation of a concussion passport in sport. This research is also a complement and build on current concussion-related quantitative data findings from the PCH (Sport Canada) 2021 Safety, Ethics, Equity in Sport Survey. It will help guide future directions of Government of Canada support and leadership in the areas of concussion management and prevention as well as directly inform the work of the federal-provincial and territorial (F-P/T) Concussions Working Group (co-chaired by PCH Sport Canada) and the F-P/T Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Ministers.

### Objectives

The goal of the Public Opinion Research (POR) project will be a final report (in both English and French). This report will include qualitative data findings stemming from key focus groups and subject matter experts consultations identifying the perceived value, benefits, interest, issues, concerns, barriers, and constraints of implementing a concussion passport for participants.

## 1.2 Methodology

### Qualitative Research – Focus groups

Léger conducted a series of ten online focus group sessions with French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians. Conducting the groups online offered the opportunity to regroup people from all the regions in Canada. Four focus groups were held with adults playing an organized sport, three focus groups were held with youth playing an organized sport and three focus groups were held with parents who have children playing an organized sport. Two groups were held in French, and the eight other groups were held in English. For each online focus group, ten participants were recruited by our professional recruiters. A total of 91 recruits participated in the online focus groups (see Table 3 for details). All participants in the focus groups received an honorarium of \$100.

The focus groups were conducted online using Focus Vision's CMNTY platform. This platform allowed for video conferencing groups, observers in a separate virtual room, chat between participants and the moderator, and chat between the observation room and the moderator. Each session was 90 minutes long, thereby ensuring the involvement of each participant.

All sessions allowed for remote participation.

Table 3. Details of the focus groups

Session Detail	Date	Recruits	Participants	Language
Adults – Atlantic	March 23	10	8	English
Adults – Quebec	March 23	10	9	French
Adults – British Columbia	March 24	10	9	English
Adults – Territories	March 24	10	9	English
Youth – Ontario	March 28	10	8	English
Youth – Prairies	March 28	10	9	English
Youth – British Columbia	March 29	10	10	English
Parents – Quebec	March 29	10	10	French
Parents – Ontario	March 30	10	9	English
Parents – Prairies	March 30	10	10	English

### Qualitative Research – In-depth interviews

As part of PCH (Sports Canada)'s exploration into the development of a national database to track concussions that occur in sport, in-depth interviews were also conducted with a select group of subject matter experts.

Léger was responsible for the recruitment and scheduling of the individuals for this study. The list of interviewees was provided by PCH (Sport Canada). Interviewees were contacted in advance by the Department alerting them to the pending contact by Léger and the reason for the interview. The study population was organized broadly into the following categories:

- National/Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations
- Government Representatives
- Coaches
- Health Experts

The interviews followed a structured questionnaire that was designed by Léger using an outline provided by PCH (Sport Canada). Forty interviews were conducted by a senior Léger professional and took on average approximately 45 minutes to complete.

The interviews were conducted in the official language of the interviewees' choice (French/English).

## 1.3 Overview of the Findings

### 1.3.1 Focus groups

Focus groups were held with three specific target audiences: 1) parents of youth playing in organized sports, 2) youth and young adults playing in organized sports and 3) adults also playing in organized sports. While these three targets did show some discrepancies in terms of their interpretation of the risk of head injury or how important this issue was for the sport they play in, all three target audiences displayed a similar response to the concept of the concussion passport.

In general, participants tended to somewhat minimize the risk of head injury for their sport. Participant in all three segments did recognize the potential severity and the risk of long-term damage that could ensue from a concussion but tended to feel that the occurrence of this type of injury was fairly low. They tended to believe that the risk became more real for older athletes (late teens, collegiate, professional sports) and for elite, national level athlete competing at very the top echelons of their sport. The danger for pre-teens playing in recreational leagues was at the other far end of the spectrum.

However, the consensus was that more should be done to prevent head injury in sport and more efforts should be put in raising awareness as to the adequate treatment of the condition and how back to play protocols should be followed by parents and athletes. As well, better training for coaches, their assistants, league, and association officials were seen as necessary.

Among those who had personally suffered or parents of youth who had suffered a concussion, the recollection of the full process from the event on the field of play and the later return to play were varied. But in all of these cases, they (the athlete or the parent) made the final decision on when was the right time to go back to the sport, regardless on whether or not that decision was aligned with the recommendation from their family physician.

When presented with the general concept of the concussion passport, the pattern was the same for all three target audiences. After hearing parents or peers discuss a past event of a concussion and the trials that followed, the risk of head injury and the need for greater awareness of these risks, initial reactions to the concept were rather positive. The need to "do something about it" was apparent. However, participants soon raised concerns, and several became opponents of the idea. Generally, there were four kinds of concerns:

1. **Privacy concerns:** The possibility that individual level highly confidential medical information could be shared potentially outside the health care system was a fundamental concern. Some believe that they alone should decide if and when their personal data can be shared. Any possibility that some information could be shared with leagues, associations, coaches, or any third party raised red flags.
2. **Potential discrimination:** For athletes and parents, they feared that information regarding their concussion history could hurt their or their child's ability to "make the team". At the time of tryouts, coaches could decide to pass on a player based on the information found in the passport and opt for another player of similar potential with no concussion history. To parents and athletes, this would be a form of discrimination.

3. **The right to choose:** Both parents and athletes believe that divulging information about their health should be their decision and theirs alone. Sharing personal information should, in their view, always be voluntary and their own responsibility. The idea of the passport as presented was objectionable based on this principle.
4. **Other third parties:** Some participants also feared that access to the passport could lead to interested third parties using that information for non-intended purposes. The example of insurers was used by participants in different groups.

While only a minority still supported the idea of the passport, by the end of the sessions, this did not deter from the fact that participants felt “more should be done” to protect our youth and Canadian adults playing sports. Participants did feel that if the information about concussions were used only at an aggregate level to better understand risks, occurrence by sport, by age group and other significant variables; they would be supportive. If this type of data helped both the medical and sport communities in Canada, they would be supportive of that effort. For most, truly protecting Canadians, the first need must come from greater awareness, better communication and increased training on concussions in sport. Other suggested more voluntary systems where parents and athletes could share their concussion history when they believe it is in their best interest. Regardless of the mechanism used (e.g., medic-alert analogy or any other potential systems), the idea was always framed in the context of voluntary disclosure.

### 1.3.2 In-depth interviews

When considering the overall volume of amateur sport that occurs annually in Canada across all ages and levels, a very small percentage is subject to any organized collecting of concussion data. When data collection does occur, it tends to be among elite level teams and during major competitive events.

The collection of concussion-related data is often part of a broader program of monitoring the health and performance of athletes. The one broad-based sport organization that is closest to having an all-encompassing concussion tracking program is Rugby Canada. They are able to extract this type of information from their player registration database.

Barriers to concussion data collection include:

- Privacy concerns
- Questions around who should enter and maintain the database
- Challenges with proper diagnosis
- Technological structure of something cross-jurisdictional and cross-sport
- Cost

Privacy is of paramount concern. Concussion data is health information that needs to be managed carefully, with consideration on how it gets compiled and who has access to it. For associations and coaches, another major uncertainty related to the building and maintaining of such a database included who would be responsible for entering the data and what the platform would consist of.

In many leagues, there are a few examples of teams electronically tracking player injury information, including concussions. This tracking usually occurred through software applications provided by private companies which were maintained by a team trainer or other support staff. This type of injury tracking was usually with a higher level, elite team and there typically was a cost associated with the application.

Extending this to a system that encompassed an entire sport at all levels, let alone one that includes multiple sports is very difficult to envision. There is neither the human resource capacity nor the financial wherewithal to extend, what is done occasionally at a very high level, throughout an entire sport.

The cost of developing and maintaining a concussion database was not only a concern measured in dollars, but also in the human resources required to design and implement a system.

All stakeholders interviewed for this study spoke positively of the efforts being made currently to raise awareness of concussions in sport, better detection protocols and educating on the steps necessary to ensure it is properly treated before returning to play. There was a strong feeling these were important initiatives, and they were making a difference in how the community was approaching concussions in their sport. While supportive of a concussion database, there was a concern it may detract from these efforts.

Should a database be established, there would need to be careful thought as to what information is collected and how it is managed. While a personalized database would be beneficial in terms of mitigating multiple concussion syndrome, there is a concern the historical concussion record could be mis-used by elite athletic programs as a screening tool when recruiting participants. And even the slightest potential of this would have a detrimental impact on an athlete/parent's fulsome participation in a database.

While there are concerns and some doubt about the ability to develop and launch a multi-sport concussion tracking program, there is a very strong desire among researchers and sport associations for more accurate data on concussion incidence in sport. There is a need for more aggregated data to help further understanding about concussion in sport, and also assist in measuring the impact of changes that sports have already implemented to manage concussions.

Concussion in sport is not viewed like other injuries. For too long it was rarely recognized as a 'real' injury. This is changing with the advent of consistent awareness and detection methodologies that many sports are incorporating, such as mandatory certification requirements for teams and coaches. In addition, greater focus on ensuring a medical assessment is performed and a Return to Play is required is improving how concussions are treated. Long held views are beginning to change and will need to continue to do so to ensure concussions are consistently treated with the seriousness they deserve.

## **1.4 Notes on Interpretation of the Research Findings**

The views and observations expressed in this document do not reflect those of PCH (Sport Canada). This report was compiled by Léger based on the research conducted specifically for this project. This research is not probabilistic; the results cannot be inferred to the general population of Canada.

## 1.5 Political Neutrality Statement and Contact Information

Léger certifies that the final deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada's political neutrality requirements outlined in the Policy on Communications and Federal Identity and the Directive on the Management of Communications.

Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



Signed:

Christian Bourque, Senior Researcher

Léger Marketing Inc.



# Appendix

## A.1 Screening Guide

### DISCUSSION GROUPS DESCRIPTION

The discussion groups will be held online via Focus Vision Platform.

The target population for this whole research project is comprised of three main groups of Canadians: Adults (25+) and youth (16-24) taking part in organized sports and parents of organized sports participants.

The objective is to recruit 10 participants per discussion group.

		PARTICIPANT PROFILE
<b>ADULTS</b>	GR 1 = ATLANTIC (ENG) GR 2 = QUEBEC (FRA) GR3 = BRITISH COL. (ENG) GR 4 = TERRITORIES (ENG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults over 18 (varied sociodemographic)</li> <li>• Gender: a good mix</li> <li>• Language spoken: English OR French depending on the region</li> <li>• Age group: a good mix (25- 65)</li> <li>• Education: a good mix</li> <li>• Occupation: a good mix</li> <li>• Income: a good mix</li> <li>• Taking part in organized sports – before the pandemic and expect to resume the activity</li> </ul>
<b>YOUTH</b>	GR 5 = ONTARIO (ENG) GR 6 = PRAIRIES (ENG) GR 7 = BRITISH COL. (ENG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth 16-24 (varied sociodemographic)</li> <li>• Gender: a good mix</li> <li>• Language spoken: English</li> <li>• Age group: a good mix (16-24) half and half under – upper 18</li> <li>• Education: a good mix</li> <li>• Occupation: a good mix</li> <li>• Income: a good mix</li> <li>• Taking part in organized sports – before the pandemic and expect to resume the activity</li> </ul>
<b>PARENTS</b>	GR 8 = QUEBEC. (FRA) GR 9 = ONTARIO (ENG) GR 10 = PRAIRIES (ENG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults over 18 (varied sociodemographic)</li> <li>• Gender: a good mix</li> <li>• Language spoken: English OR French depending on the region</li> <li>• Age group: a good mix</li> <li>• Education: a good mix</li> <li>• Occupation: a good mix</li> <li>• Income: a good mix</li> <li>• Having at least minimal involvement in their child's sport (attending practices, games, competitions, involvement in the club or in club activities)</li> </ul>

For each participant, collect the following information:

Participant name:

Phone number at home:

Cell phone:	
Email address:	
Recruitment date:	Recruiter:
Group #:	Confirmation (date):

**STEP 1 (WEB) – SCREENING AND PROFILING**

**INTRO**

Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ of Léger, a public opinion company. We are currently organizing discussion groups on behalf of the Government of Canada. The objective of the discussion group is to collect opinions and perceptions about **organized sports in Canada**. You don't need to be an expert to participate in these focus groups.

We are preparing to hold a few discussion groups with Canadians like you. These discussion groups will be conducted "online" and will be led by a research professional with up to ten participants. All opinions will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy. We don't have anything to sell, and we don't advertise and it is not an opinion poll on current events or politics.

Your participation is voluntary. All information collected, used and/or disclosed will be used for research purposes only and the research is entirely confidential. We are also committed to protecting the privacy of all participants. The names of the participants will not be provided to any third party. May I continue?

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF ASKED ABOUT PRIVACY LAWS, SAY: "The information collected through the research is subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act, the legislation of the Government of Canada, and to the provisions of relevant provincial privacy legislation.]

The discussion group will take place online on the (INSERT DATE/TIME) and will be a maximum of **1.5 hours**. You will be compensated **\$100** for your time.

**Q0**

Are you available to participate in this focus group at **INSERT DATE/TIME**?

Yes	1
No	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

**A1. Are you interested in participating?**

Yes	1	<b>CONTINUE</b>
No	2	<b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

I would now like to ask you a few questions to see if you meet our eligibility criteria to participate.

A2. The group discussions we are organizing are going to be held **over the Internet**. They are going to be "online focus groups". Participants will need to have **a computer**, a **high-speed Internet connection**, and a **WebCam** in order to participate in the group. Would you be able to participate under these conditions?

Yes	1	<b>CONTINUE</b>
No	2	<b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

## PROFILING

### Parents

In normal times, so we refer also before the pandemic, are you a parent, step-parent or guardian to a child or children that are involved in organized sport as a participant, and intend to continue to participate in an organized sport once the pandemic is over?

*An organized sport is one that is structured in some manner with coaching, established rules and schedule for games or events. There is often a governing body overseeing the sports affairs.*

Yes	1	<b>CONTINUE</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO SPORTS1</b>

### Parents2

Do you or do you not play the following roles in your child(ren)'s sports?

- A. I attend my children's practices
- B. I attend my children's competitions
- C. I attend parent meetings with my child's club and coaches
- D. I am involved in my child's sports club (volunteer coach, fundraising, accompanying children to competitions, organizing team tours, etc.)

Yes	1 ELIG GR-8-9-10	<b>CONTINUE</b>
No	2	<b>GO TO SPORTS1</b>

**Must have at least one yes to be eligible for the "parent" group**

### SPORTS1

In normal times, so if we refer also before the pandemic, have you been involved in organized sport as a participant, coach, instructor, official or volunteer and intend to continue to participate in an organized sport once the pandemic is over?

*An organized sport is one that is structured in some manner with coaching, established rules and schedule for games or events. There is often a governing body overseeing the sports affairs.*

Yes	1 ELIG GR1-2-3-4-5-6-7	<b>CONTINUE TO SPORT2</b>
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No	2
----	---

**THANK  
AND  
TERMINATE**

**SPORTS2**

In which capacity you have participated in organized sport in Canada?

Participant	1
Coach/Instructor	2
Volunteer	3
Administrator	4
Official	5
Other (specify)	0 96

**SPORTS3**

What is the sport?

96 : \_\_\_\_\_

Example of organized sport but not limited to:

Boxing, Rugby, Football, Curling, Water polo, Volleyball, Judo, Equestrian, Skate, Ski, Snowboard, Hockey, etc.

**IF NOT AN ORGANIZED SPORTS – UNORGANIZED SPORTS** Are loosely organized sports not regulated by a governing body AND have undefined or unclear rules. **THANK AND TERMINATE**

**INJURY HISTORY (No quotas on INJURY)**

Parents: Has your child ever suffered a sports injury?

IF YES: What type of injury was it? SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth and Adults:

Have you ever suffered an injury in the practice of your sport?

IF YES: What type of injury was it? SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRO1. Socio-demographic questions**

1. Do you or anyone in your immediate family work or have you ever worked in ...?

Marketing Research	1 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
Marketing and Advertising	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
Public relations, communications	3 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
Media (newspapers, television, radio, etc.)	4 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>
Telecommunications	5 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

None of the above	9
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The following questions is about sex. The Government of Canada takes Canadians' privacy very seriously. This information is only being collected because sports are currently activities often organized by the categories of men and women. Your responses to these questions are confidential and you may opt to not provide a response.

### Sex

2. 1. What was your sex at birth?

... a man	1
... a woman	2
Prefer not to say	3

### Province

3. In which province or territory do you live?

British Columbia	1	Gr3-7
Alberta	2	Gr6-10
Saskatchewan	3	Gr6-10
Manitoba	4	Gr6-10
Ontario	5	Gr 5-9
Quebec	6	Gr2-8
New Brunswick	7	Gr1
Nova Scotia	8	Gr1
Prince Edward Island	9	Gr1
Newfoundland	10	Gr1
Northwest Territories	11	Gr4
Yukon	12	Gr4
Nunavut	13	Gr4

### 4. Area

4. Do you currently live in a urban or rural area?

Urban	1
Rural	2

**Ensure a good mix in the group**

### 5. Language

5. What is your *first official language spoken*?

French	1	
English	2	

### 6. AGE.

6. What age category do you fall into?

Under 16	99	THANK AND TERMINATE
16 to 17	1	Eligible for GR 5-6-7-
18 to 24	2	Eligible for GR 5-6-7-8-9-10
25 to 34	3	Eligible for GR 1-2-3-4-8-9-10
35 to 44	4	Eligible for GR 1-2-3-4-8-9-10

45 to 54	5	Eligible for GR 1-2-3-4-8-9-10
55 to 64	6	Eligible for GR 1-2-3-4-8-9-10
65 and over	7	Eligible for GR -8-9-10

## 7. EDUCATION.

7. What is the highest level of education you completed?

Some high school or less	1
High school diploma or equivalent	2
Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma	3
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	4
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's level	5
Bachelor's degree	6
Postgraduate degree above bachelor's level	7

## 8. OCCUPATION

8. Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status? Are you...

Working full-time (35 or more hours per week)	1
Working part-time (less than 35 hours per week)	2
Self-employed	3
Unemployed, but looking for work	4
A student attending school full-time	5
Retired	6
Not in the workforce (full-time homemaker, full-time parent, or unemployed and not looking for work)	7
Other employment status. Please specify.	8

## 9 – INCOME

Which of the following categories best describes your total household income? That is, the total income of all persons in your household combined, before taxes.

Under \$20,000	<b>1</b>
Between \$20,000 and just under \$40,000	<b>2</b>
Between \$40,000 and just under \$60,000	<b>3</b>
Between \$60,000 and just under \$80,000	<b>4</b>
Between \$80,000 and just under \$100,000	<b>5</b>
Between \$100,000 and just under \$150,000	<b>6</b>
\$150,000 and above	<b>7</b>

**10. DISABILITY**

Do you identify as a person with a disability? A person with a disability is a person who has a long-term or recurring impairment (such as vision, hearing, mobility, flexibility, dexterity, pain, learning, developmental, memory or mental health-related) which limits their daily activities inside or outside the home (such as at school, work, or in the community in general).

Yes	1	<b>At least one per gr</b>
No	2	
[Do not read] Don't know	98	
[Do not read] Prefer not to answer	99	

**11. Disability2 (IF YES AT Q10)**

What type of disability are you living with?

Physical	<b>1</b>
Mental	<b>2</b>
Intellectual	<b>3</b>
Cognitive	<b>4</b>
Learning	<b>5</b>
Communication	<b>6</b>
Sensory	<b>7</b>
Other, please specify: _____	<b>8</b>
Prefer not to say	<b>9</b>

The personal information you provide to the Government of Canada is governed in accordance with the *Privacy Act*. We only collect the information we need to conduct the research project.

**Purpose of collection:** We require your personal information to determine your eligibility and record your consent to participate in this research.

**Other uses or disclosures:** Your personal information will not be shared. In limited and specific situations, your personal information may be disclosed without your consent in accordance with subsection 8(2) of the *Privacy Act*.

**Do you consent to participate in this research?**

- Yes (continue)
- No (STOP)

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### INVITATION

Thank you. We'd like to invite you to participate in the discussion group.

The discussion group will take place at [XX], on \_\_\_XX\_\_\_ (date/time) \_\_XX\_\_.

Just a quick reminder that you will need a computer, a high-speed Internet connection in order to participate in the chat group. You cannot participate using a mobile phone.

Representatives from the Government of Canada and research analyst may observe the discussion group, but will not have access to any of your personal information. Do you consent to participate in this discussion group ?

Yes	1
No	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

Now I have a few questions that relate to privacy, your personal information, and the research process. We will need your consent on a few issues that enable us to conduct our research. As I run through these questions, please feel free to ask me any questions you would like clarified.

We need to provide the **online platform** and **session moderator** with the names and profiles of the people attending the discussion group because only the individuals invited are allowed in the session and the facility and moderator must have this information for verification purposes. Please be assured that this information will be kept strictly confidential.

#### GO TO P1

P1) Now that I've explained this, do I have your permission to provide your name and profile **to the online platform and moderator?**

Yes	1 GO TO P2
No	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>



P2) A recording of the discussion group session will be produced for the research project purposes. The recording will only be used by the team of people working on the project at Léger and the Government of Canada to assist in preparing a report on the research findings.  
Do you agree to be recorded for research purposes only?

Yes	1 COMPLETE THE INVITATION
No	2 <b>Read information below and P2A</b>

It is necessary for the research process for us to record the discussion group session as the researcher needs this material to complete the report.

P2a) Now that I've explained this, do I have your permission for recording the discussion group?

Yes	1 COMPLETE THE INVITATION
No	2 <b>THANK AND TERMINATE</b>

As we are only inviting a small number of people to take part, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to participate, please call so that we can get someone to replace you. You can reach us at \_\_\_\_ at our office. Please ask for \_\_\_\_.

We will send your login information to the online chat group to your email address. Please confirm receipt of this information when it reaches you.

Your email address : \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much!**

Name:

Phone number (during the day):

Phone number (during the evening):

Email address:

## A.2 Discussion Guides

### FOCUS GROUPS

Total anticipated time per group: 90 minutes

#### Introduction and explanation

##### WELCOME AND PRESENTATION

Hello everyone and welcome to this discussion group. I hope everyone is doing well. Let me introduce myself, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am \_\_\_\_\_ with Léger Marketing. Léger Marketing is a public opinion and consumer research firm. Some of you probably already know Léger Marketing from our surveys and our presence in the various media across the country. In addition to surveys, we organize discussion groups, like this one, on a variety of different topics.

##### PRIMARY AIM

Léger Marketing is conducting discussion groups for Canadian Heritage (Sport Canada) to obtain your opinions and perceptions on a few issues affecting organized sport in Canada.

##### RULES OF DISCUSSION

Even though you may not be able to see them, I did want to advise you that we do have some of our analyst colleagues participating in this study. They will be listening to the discussion group and will be taking notes.

Discussion groups are designed to encourage open and honest discussion. My role as moderator is to guide the discussion and encourage everyone to participate. I will also ensure that the discussion stays on topic and stays on schedule.

Your role is to answer questions and express your opinions. We want to hear everyone's opinions in a discussion group, so don't hold back if you have a comment even if you think your opinion may be different from others in the group. Others may share your point of view. Everyone's opinion is important and should be respected.

I would also like to emphasize that there are no wrong answers. We are simply looking for your opinion. This is not a test of your knowledge.

It is also important that you speak loud enough so that everyone can hear you and that you speak one at a time so that I can follow the discussion.

Finally, we are video recording the discussion group for analysis purposes. The recording will only be viewed by the individuals working on this project to help them write a project report for Canadian Heritage (Sport Canada). The recordings will not be circulated in any other way without your explicit consent.

##### RESULTS CONFIDENTIALITY

- The discussions we will have this evening will always remain confidential.
- Your name will never be mentioned in the project report.
- Information is being collected for the project purposes only.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

## A. PARTICIPANTS – ADULTS AND YOUTH

### Ice-breaker Task:

To start off, please introduce yourself by sharing your first name and the organized sport(s) in which you are involved, whether as a participant, coach, organizer, referee, etc., with the rest of the group.

We are now going to start the question-and-answer portion which is our main reason for being here today.

### Part 1: Introduction to Head Injuries in Sport

*\*\*\*For the purposes of this discussion, please note that the term 'sport' refers to 'organized sport' which defined as "Organized sport is generally officiated, has a regular schedule, and is governed by rules. A few examples are a community soccer program, swim team or athletics club." \*\*\**

I would like to know if you consider your sport to be a slightly dangerous or very dangerous, in the sense that there is a high risk of injuries or accidents?

What types of injuries or accidents are most common in the sport(s) you play?

Have you ever been injured or had an accident while playing your sport(s)? What kind of injury or accident have you experienced?

Have you experienced any head injuries while playing your sport(s)? Is there a high or low probability of you sustaining a concussion(s)? Why is that the case, please explain your answer? Are there more or less risks of concussions in the sport(s) you play than in other sports?

Have you ever suffered a concussion? Once or more than once?

If not, have you ever witnessed another participant sustain a concussion?

### Part 2: Management of concussion

What was it like managing your recovery from the concussion you sustained?

Who was involved in this management? Was it well managed from your perspective?

What were everyone's responsibilities? The doctors? The coaches? Parents or family? The club or the league?

Do you feel that your family handled the management aspect of your concussion to the best of their abilities? Please explain your answer.

Was a medical document or record (e.g., a medical note from the doctor or a medical assessment providing an overview of the head injury sustained with the prescribed treatment etc.) of your concussion shared with your club, league, coaches, or your family and who shared it?

What kind of information was included in this record?

What happened with this record?

What is it supposed to be used for? How could it be used?

Did you have any negative experience(s) with sharing this information with the coach and/or club?

Looking back at the concussion sustained, the management of it and your recovery experience, do you now have any concerns about continuing to play sports in the future?

Do you have concerns about the possibility of sustaining additional concussions and what are they?

### **Part 3: Introduction of the Concussion Passport**

Let us now explore a hypothetical situation.

The scenario is as follows: Visualize that there is a medical document or record that captures the information of an individual's (or participant's) concussion history (which would include current and previous concussion events). This would be a personal document for each participant.

If asked, would you agree to share your medical history of concussions with coaches and sport organizations/clubs via a document (e.g., a health passport) to ensure measures are in place to protect your health?

Why? Can you explain your answer?

What makes you say yes?

What makes you say no?

In the future, if a health passport with your concussion history existed would you be comfortable sharing this document with your sport organization? Do you think that this would help your sport organization/club implement the appropriate measures to protect your health when you returned to play post-concussion? Please explain your answer.

Do you see any advantages and/or benefits associated with such a document?

Why do you say this?

### **Part 4: Concerns**

How do you feel about sharing your medical concussion history with your sport organization/club?

Can you explain your feelings about it?

IF YES: What are your main concerns? Why? Are there any other concerns?

IF NO: Why do you say that? Can you tell why you don't have any concern?

IF NOT MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY:

What are your concerns when it comes to the organization's management of your medical concussion history (captured in a health document)?

Please explain your concerns.

**Explore in depth any concerns participants may have about sharing their medical records with their sport organization/club.**

### **Part 5. Conclusion**

That wraps up the questions I had for you today. I would like to know if you have any other comments about the idea of a medical concussion passport in organized sports.

Any other ideas you would like to share before we end this session?

Prompt: Would something like the COVID-19 Passport be relevant?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.**

## **B. PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **Ice-breaker Task:**

To start off, please introduce yourself by sharing your first name and the organized sport(s) your child(ren) participates in. Also let us know if you play a role in your child's sport (whether as a coach, trainer, manager, volunteer, referee, etc.)

We are now going to start the question-and-answer portion which is our main reason for being here today.

### **Part 1: Introduction to Head Injuries in Sport**

*\*\*\*For the purposes of this discussion, please note that the term 'sport' refers to 'organized sport' which defined as "Organized sport is generally officiated, has a regular schedule, and is governed by rules. A few examples are a community soccer program, swim team or athletics club." \*\*\**

I would like to know if you consider the sport, in which your child(ren) participates, to be slightly dangerous or very dangerous, in the sense that there is a high risk of injuries or accidents?

What types of injuries or accidents are most common in the sport(s) in which your child(ren) participates?

Has\Have your child(ren) ever been injured or had an accident while participating in their sport(s)? What kind of injury or accident has/have they sustained?

Has\Have your child(ren) experienced any head injuries while playing their sport(s)?

Is there a high or low probability of them sustaining a concussion(s) in their sport(s)? Why is that the case, please explain your answer? Are there more or less risks of concussions in the sport(s) they play than in other sports?

Has\Have your child(ren) ever suffered a concussion? Once or more than once?

If not, have you ever witnessed another child participant sustain a concussion?

## **Part 2: Management of concussion**

What was it like managing your child(ren) recovery from the concussion they sustained?

Who else was involved in your child(ren) concussion management?

What was involved in their concussion management?

What were everyone's concussion management responsibilities? The doctors? The coaches? Parents or family? The club or the league?

Was a medical document or record of your child(ren) concussion shared with you, the club, the league, or the coaches? What information related to your child's concussion did you share with your child's coaches and/or sport organization?

What type of information was included in this medical document or record?

How was this information in the record used? What happened with this record once your child was cleared to go back to playing their organized sport?

Did you have any negative experience(s) with sharing this information with the coach, sport organization and/or club?

## **Part 3: Introduction of the Concussion Passport**

Let us now explore a hypothetical situation.

The scenario is as follows: Visualize that there is a medical document or record that captures the information of an individual's (or participant's) concussion history (which would include current and previous concussion events). This would be a personal document for each participant.

If asked, would you agree to share your child(ren)'s medical history of concussions with coaches and sport organizations/clubs via a document (e.g., a health passport) to ensure measures are in place to protect their health?

Why? Can you explain your answer?

What makes you say yes?

What makes you say no?

In the future, if a health passport containing your child(ren)'s concussion history existed would you be comfortable sharing this document with their sport organization/club? Do you think that this would help their sport organization/club implement the appropriate measures to help protect the health of your child(ren) when they return to play post-concussion? Please explain your answer.

Do you see any advantages and/or benefits associated with such a document?

Why do you say this?

#### **Part 4: Concerns**

Would you be willing to share your child(ren)'s medical concussion history in the form of a concussion passport?

How do you feel about sharing this information sport organization/club?

Can you explain your feelings about it?

IF YES: What are your main concerns? Why? Are there any other concerns?

IF NO: Why do you say that? Can you tell why you don't have any concern?

IF NOT MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY:

What are your concerns when it comes to the organization's management of your child(ren)'s medical concussion history (captured in a health document)?

Please explain your concerns.

**Explore in depth any concerns participants may have about sharing their child(ren)'s medical records with their sport organization/club**

Do you feel that your sport organization is equipped to manage concussion information? Please explain your answer.

#### **Part 5. Conclusion**

That wraps up the questions I had for you today. I would like to know if you have any other comments about the idea of a medical concussion passport in organized sports.

Any other ideas you would like to share before we end this session.

Prompt: Would something like the COVID-19 Passport be relevant?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.**

# IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS

## INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the moderator and Léger Marketing
- Identify sponsor of the research and broad objectives - PCH (Sport Canada)
- Broadly explain who else is being interviewed
- Meeting duration – about half hour to 45 minutes
- Format for conversation
- Audio recording (with permission)
- Anonymity in reporting and the report will be publicly available on Library of Parliament website when complete

## OBJECTIVE

Data is needed to gain a fuller understanding of the Canadian public's perceived value, benefits, interest, and concerns on the implementation of a concussion passport in sport. This research will also complement and build on current concussion-related quantitative data findings from the PCH (Sport Canada) 2021 Safety, Ethics, Equity in Sport Survey. It will help guide future directions of Government of Canada support and leadership in the areas of concussion management and prevention as well as directly inform the work of the Federal-Provincial and Territorial (F-P/T) Concussions Working Group (co-chaired by PCH Sport Canada) and the F-P/T Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Ministers.

## NATIONAL/PROVINCIAL/ TERRITOTIAL SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

### Q1

Is your sporting organization doing any data collection on concussions (e.g., occurrence of, history of individuals)?

PROBE FOR DETAILS IN DISCUSSION

IF YES: What does that look like? How are you gathering the data? Why are you gathering this information?

IF NO: Have you considered something to track concussions? Why not? [IF NECESSARY & DECISION NOT TO] Why did you decide not to go this route?

IF IN DEVELOPMENT: Please describe what you are doing?

### Q2

Would you agree that it would be helpful to the organization and to the coaches to have access to an athletes' medical history of concussions via a document (e.g., a concussion health record) to ensure measures are in place to protect their health?

- Why do you say that?
- What are the benefits?
- Are there concerns? [IF SO] What are your concerns?



**Q3** [MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN Q2 ABOVE]

Do you have any concerns with medical history of concussion(s) being captured in a document (e.g., a health record or account)?

IF YES: Please explain what your concerns are. Can this be mitigated somehow?

**Q4**

Would using a QR code similar to the COVID system be an option to store concussion data?

- Are there concerns with this? TRY TO LIST CONCERNS
- Who do you see as having access?
- What information should be available? How much detail?

**Wrap**

That concludes my questions. Do you have anything you wanted to add to what we discussed?

Thank you. Have a good rest of your day

## **GOVERNMENT BODIES**

### **Q1**

Is your government organization doing any data collection on concussions (e.g., occurrence of, history of individuals)?  
PROBE FOR DISCUSSION

IF YES: What does that look like? How are you gathering the data? Why are you gathering this information?

IF NO: Have you considered something to track concussions? Why not? [IF NECESSARY] Why did you decide not to go this route?

IF IN DEVELOPMENT: Please describe what you are doing?

### **Q2**

In your respective jurisdiction, what would be the best mechanism to collect/manage concussion data?

- What challenges do you/ would you face if you undertook this?

### **Q3**

Do you have any concerns with the management of medical history of concussion(s) in a document (e.g., a health record)?

- IF YES: Please explain what your concerns are. Can this be mitigated somehow?

### **Q4**

Would using a QR code similar to the COVID system be an option to store concussion data?

- Are there concerns with this? TRY TO LIST CONCERNS
- Who do you see as having access?
- What information should be available? How much detail?

## **Wrap**

That concludes my questions. Do you have anything you wanted to add to what we discussed?

Thank you. Have a good rest of your day

## HEALTH EXPERTS

### Q1

Do you feel that data collection on concussions is important?

- Why do you say that?
- What would be the benefits?

### Q2

Which are the best mechanisms to collect and manage concussion data? Please select all that apply.

- A personal health document/record
- A database
- Something else [DISCUSS]

### Q3

How can the concussion data be used to prevent future re-occurrences? Please provide a detailed response.

### Q4

Do you have any concerns with the management of medical history of concussion(s) in a document (e.g., a health record)?

- IF YES: Please explain what your concerns are. Can this be mitigated somehow?

### Q5

Would using a QR code similar to the COVID system be an option to store concussion data?

- Are there concerns with this? TRY TO LIST CONCERNS
- Who do you see as having access?
- What information should be available? How much detail?

## Wrap

That concludes my questions. Do you have anything you wanted to add to what we discussed?

Thank you. Have a good rest of your day

## COACHES

### Q1

Is your sporting organization doing any data collection on concussions (e.g., occurrence of, history of individuals)?  
PROBE FOR DISCUSSION

IF YES: What does that look like? How are you gathering the data? Why are you gathering this information?

IF NO: Have you considered something to track concussions? Why not? [IF NECESSARY] Why did you decide not to go this route?

IF IN DEVELOPMENT: Please describe what you are doing?

### Q2

Do you have any concerns with the management of medical history of concussion(s) in a document (e.g., a health record)?

- IF YES: Please explain what your concerns are. Can this be mitigated somehow?

### Q3

Would you agree that it would be helpful to the organization and to the coaches to have access to an athletes' medical history of concussions via a document (e.g., a concussion health record) to ensure measures are in place to protect their health?

- Why do you say that?
- What are the benefits?
- Are there concerns? [IF YES] What are these? PROBE PERSPECTIVES: player; parent; coach

### Q4 [MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN Q3 ABOVE]

Do you have any concerns with medical history of concussion(s) being captured in a document (e.g., a health record or account)?

IF YES: Please explain what your concerns are. Can this be mitigated somehow?

### Q5

Would using a QR code similar to the COVID system be an option to store concussion data?

- Are there concerns with this? TRY TO LIST CONCERNS
- Who do you see as having access?
- What information should be available? How much detail?

## Wrap

That concludes my questions. Do you have anything you wanted to add to what we discussed?

Thank you. Have a good rest of your day

