**Neurologists warn of long-term dangers from bodychecking in youth hockey**

[**Long-term dangers to the brain from bodychecking**](http://UrlBlockedError.aspx)

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MONTREAL—Two Quebec neurologists are speaking out about the dangers of bodychecking in minor hockey, warning that the long term effects of brain injuries can be severe on players.

In Quebec, bodychecking begins in double letter bantam and up, which covers players who are 14 or 15 years old. There are no alternatives for children who want to play hockey competitively without checking and the dangers that go along with it.

“I see it more and more with our players, especially with the kids that come out of juniors. They’ve had one or two concussions and it's hampered their career,” said Kevin Figsby, the coach of the Concordia men’s hockey team for the past 14 years.

The coach of the Stinger’s says he is concerned by what he sees.

It's something that's been talked about a lot lately, considering the way the game is being played.

“We talk about the game becoming bigger, faster and more physical,” said Figsby.

That’s a big concern for doctors such as Scott Delaney, who worry about young players and their brains. He says the damage of concussions can't always be undone.

“You have scarring in there. It’s not something that’s going to go away. it will always be with you possibly for the rest of your life,” said Delaney, a McGill University Health Centre emergency room doctor.

That's why two Quebec neurologists are pushing for an end to body checking, especially among children.

With checking starting with kids as young as 13, and young brains not fully formed until about 20, neurologist Patrick Cosette says they need to be protected.

“I dont' accept that kids at 13 or 14 are being exposed to full body check when they have virtually no chance of playing in the NHL,” said Cosette.

Hockey Quebec says it's doing more than most—Quebec is the only province across Canada where there isn't body checking in pee wee, and once it does begin, Hockey Quebec says it's all in how you teach it.

“Bantam level is appropriate if you are among the best players and you're well taught, the main key is teaching,” said Yves Archambault, speaking for Hockey Quebec.

“I think the coaches understand it a lot more now, I think there's a been a lot more coach education,” said Figsby.

Cossette worries about the possible long-term problems.

“There is an increased risk of neurodegeneritive disease, Alzheimer’s Disease, Parkinson’s Disease,” said Cosette. “Concussions are a problem in many sports, and at least by keeping body contact down below a certain level you decrease it, but you never remove it entirely.”