

NFL Charities Awards Research Grant to UCSD School of Medicine Researcher

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Nearly \$1 million in NFL Charities Grants dedicated this year to concussion prevention and treatment nationwide

NFL Charities, the charitable foundation of the National Football League owners, has awarded more than \$1.6 million in grants to support sports-related medical research at 16 organizations, the NFL announced today. Of these grants, \$99,700 will go to a team of researchers at UC San Diego School of Medicine who are studying novel methods of detecting brain injury.

The research project led by Mingxiong Huang, PhD, professor and associate director of the MEG Radiology Imaging Laboratory in the UCSD Department of Radiology, will develop a new neuro-imaging technique using Magnetoencephalography (MEG) and Diffusion Tensor Imaging (DTI) for detecting neuronal injuries.



NFL Charities provide grants to study a range of injuries, including brain injury. (Photo credit: AP)

Photo/Gregory Bull)

“Injuries such as concussions are not visible using conventional CT or MRI in football players or other athletes with mild traumatic brain injury,” Huang said. “The work being done at UC San Diego’s imaging labs will enable a coach, parent, or athlete to better assess a head injury and decide on the most appropriate course of treatment – including possibly staying on the sidelines.”

The NFL has supported sports-related medical research for decades through NFL Charities Medical Research Grants. Since 2000, NFL Charities has committed grants to medical facilities nationwide, including studies on brain injury, ACL injury prevention and heat stress risks.

This year’s grants include studies on association between football exposure and dementia in retired football players; the dynamic heart rate behavior of NFL athletes; the prevalence, distribution and fate of MRSA on synthetic turf grass systems; concussion surveillance among a large national sample of middle school football players; the role of cervical spine in football-related concussion; and an integrated neuroimaging study for diagnosing and monitoring mild TBI in football players.

“We are proud to support sports-related medical research proposals through NFL Charities Medical Research Grants,” said NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, President of the NFL Charities Board. “These grants will help to address risk factors for football players and all athletes, and make the game safer.”

NFL Charities is a non-profit organization created by the 32 member clubs of the National Football League to enable the teams to collectively make grants to charitable and worthwhile causes on a national scale. Since its inception, NFL Charities has granted more than \$120 million to more than 640 different organizations. NFL Charities’ primary funding categories include: sports-related medical research and education grants; player foundation grants in support of the philanthropic work of current and former NFL players; impact grants to support national youth health and fitness education initiatives as part of a league-wide commitment to fight childhood obesity; financial assistance for former NFL players in need via direct support to the NFL Player Care Foundation; team program grants which supplement the charitable and community activities of the 32 NFL clubs.

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Media Contact: Debra Kain, 619-543-6163, ddkain@ucsd.edu

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