

Blood test for concussion will end brain scan risk

A SIMPLE blood test can detect whether someone has suffered a concussion without the need for a brain scan, scientists have said.

Researchers from Orlando Health in Florida identified a biomarker released by the brain during injury. The biomarker can stay in the bloodstream for up to a week, allowing delayed symptoms of concussion to be identified.

Dr Linda Papa, lead author of the study published in *Jama Neurology*, said the blood test "could provide doctors with an important tool for simply and accurately diagnosing those patients, particularly children, and mak-

ing sure they are treated properly. If patients are not diagnosed properly and treated appropriately, it could lead to long-term problems. This test could

'This test could take the guesswork out of diagnosis by looking for a specific biomarker'

take the guesswork out of making a diagnosis by allowing doctors to simply look for a specific biomarker."

She added: "Physicians really want

to minimise the amount of computerised tomography (CT) scans in patients, especially children, who are a lot more sensitive to radiation and the side effects that can come with it."

Researchers found that when a brain injury occurs, a biomarker called the glial fibrillary acidic protein is released and enters the bloodstream. The study of nearly 600 patients over three years found that the test detected mild to moderate traumatic brain lesions with up to 97 per cent accuracy in adults.

The test also indicated which patients were in need of life-saving neurosurgery, the authors said.

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