

BMJ report highlights CTE in deceased NFL players (2016-2021) - at least one in four

Reported incidence of CTE found necessitates living diagnoses, not just for professional athletes, but for others where repetitive brain injuries occur.

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Dr. Julian Bailes

CereMark Pharma highlights a study published on August 25, 2026, in The British Medical Journal examining the prevalence of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) among former National Football League (NFL) players. The retrospective cohort study estimated that, at a minimum, 24.5% of former NFL players who died between 2016 and 2021 had confirmed CTE at death. CereMark Pharma is dedicated to advancing methods to identify CTE during life;

currently, CTE can be definitively diagnosed only through post-mortem examination.

The findings underscore the need for reliable methods to identify CTE during life, not only for former professional football players, but also for individuals with long-term exposure to repetitive head impacts, including athletes at other levels in other contact sports and military personnel. Research has associated cumulative exposure to repetitive head impacts, including both concussive and sub-concussive impacts, with an increased risk of CTE and other neurodegenerative diseases.

Dr. Julian Bailes, Chief Medical Officer of CereMark Pharma and a long-standing investigator in traumatic brain injury and CTE, said the study reinforces the importance of developing reliable methods to identify CTE during life. “Clinicians cannot effectively diagnose, monitor, or treat a disease that can currently be confirmed only after death,” Dr. Bailes said.

Dr. Bailes added that the findings support further research into positron emission tomography (PET) imaging and neurodegeneration. “Football players, soccer players, ice hockey players, military service members, and others exposed to repetitive head impacts may experience long-term neurological effects,” he said. “Advancing research and developing tools to identify CTE during life may improve patient evaluation, support the development of potential therapies, and provide objective measures for monitoring treatment response.”

CereMark Pharma remains committed to advancing [F-18 Flornaptitritil](#) (FNT), its investigational PET imaging radiopharmaceutical, and evaluating its potential to image neurodegenerative pathology in living patients. F-18 FNT is classified by the FDA as an investigational new drug that is being further evaluated in a pivotal Phase 3 trial and has not been approved by the FDA.

For more information about CereMark Pharma and its Phase 3 clinical trial, visit [CereMarkPharma.com](https://www.ceremarkpharma.com).

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