

ABSTRACT

Common lower extremity injuries in female high school soccer players in Johannesburg east district

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Background and purpose of research

As the number of females participating in sports has increased, so has the necessity of understanding the effect of female growth and development in participation, athletic ability and injury patterns. Soccer is one of the sports where South Africa has seen an increase of youth and adult females' participation.

Aim: To establish the prevalence of and extrinsic risk factors contributing to injuries in the lower extremity in female high school soccer players in the Johannesburg east district.

Method: A retrospective descriptive questionnaire – based study of 103 first team high school female soccer players in the Johannesburg east district was conducted. This was to determine point and one year prevalence of injuries, profile of injuries that affect female soccer players, associations between injuries and player position, age, use of equipment, frequency of play, and training duration and also to identify possible risk factors that contribute to injuries.

Results: The one year prevalence of injured players was 46.1% and point prevalence was 37.8%. Knee injuries (18.6%) and ankle injuries (17.6%) were reported for one year prevalence and for point prevalence knee injuries were 13.3% and ankle injuries 18.9%. An extended duration of skills ($p=0.0001$) and fitness ($p=0.02$) training in this population reduced the likelihood of incurring an injury and the older ($p=0.01$) the players, the more chances of sustaining injuries. The players who wore shin guards were less prone to shin/leg injuries ($p=0.01$) and the relative odds were 0.35 (CI 0.16-0.79). The midfielders had more foot and toe injuries ($p = 0.05$). Starting age ($p=0.78$), frequency of play ($p=0.83$) wearing of shoes ($p=0.54$) and stretching had no influence on injury.

Conclusion: The knee and ankle were the main locations of injury with defenders and midfielders mostly being injured. The increased duration of training for both skills and fitness and not wearing shin guards are risk factors for injury in female soccer players in high school.