

Comparison of Occurrence of Injuries to Footballers at Low and High Level of Achievement

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Abstract

The primary aim of the investigation was to compare the occurrence of injuries to footballers at low and high level of achievement with regard to various stages viz. ground conditions, location, field positions, training and competition. Information on injuries was collected from members of eight Indian football teams which were participating in the All India Mayor Trophy football tournament by questionnaires. In all 98 injuries were observed, 40 related to the low achievement and 58 to the high achievement group of footballers. A significant difference in the occurrence of injuries between the two achievement groups of footballers was found. Occurrence of injuries due to field conditions and position of playing were also found to be significantly different in the two achievement groups. No significant differences in injury occurrence were found between group of footballers with respect to location. Significant difference in the occurrence of injuries were observed in the groups with respect to the frequency of competition and training periods ($t=2.46, p<.05$) of footballers. While comparing causes and nature of injuries, no significant differences were found between the low and the high level of achievement footballers. The high level of achievement footballers revealed more injuries than the low level of achievement footballers. Those football players directly involved in attack or defence are more likely to be injured. Lower limb injuries were found to be predominant. The results of the study provide a useful insight into the injuries in relation to the field position, nature and location of injury in competitive football players.

Keywords: Footballers, Injuries, Training, Achievement level

Introduction

Football is one of the most popular sports in the world. Currently FIFA unified 203 National Associations and represents about 200 million active players, of which about 40 million are women. The incidence of football injuries is estimated to be 10 - 35 per game hour. An athlete plays on average about 100 hours of football per year (ranging between 50 hours per player of a local team to upto 500 hours per player for a professional team).

Australian Football Association reported 4681 injuries between 1992 and 1998 (Orchard *et al*, 1997 & 1998). In this report, it was reported that players from teams in Northern states were

slightly more (14%) likely to be injured than players from teams in Victoria (RR 1.14, 95% CI 1.07-1.21). There was no significant difference in the risk for injury to upper limb, trunk or head and neck regions. However incidence of incurring injuries to the lower limb (ankle injuries, calf and quadriceps strain etc) was reported to be greater in players from Northern teams than the teams from Victoria.

Football has been demonstrated to be among the most hazardous of organized team sports and injury is a frequent event in football (Griffith, 1989; Saxby, 1989; Seward & Patrik, 1992; Watson, 1993; Junge, 2004; Singh, 2004, 2006; Singh & Pagare, 2007). Football