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A prospective audit of injuries in English male professional football players

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Introduction & Aims

Injury prevalence and incidence have not been surveyed in English professional football for over 16 years¹. Reducing injury incidence in most sports begins evaluating the epidemiology of injuries in a given sport, and then applying a relevant Subsequently, therapeutic intervention can be evaluated. To date, the absence of any recent published injury data collection from English professional football has led to a reliance on research using European cohorts of to implement injury prevention strategies. Therefore the purpose of the present investigation is to provide a timely update on the prevalence and incidence of injury in English professional football.

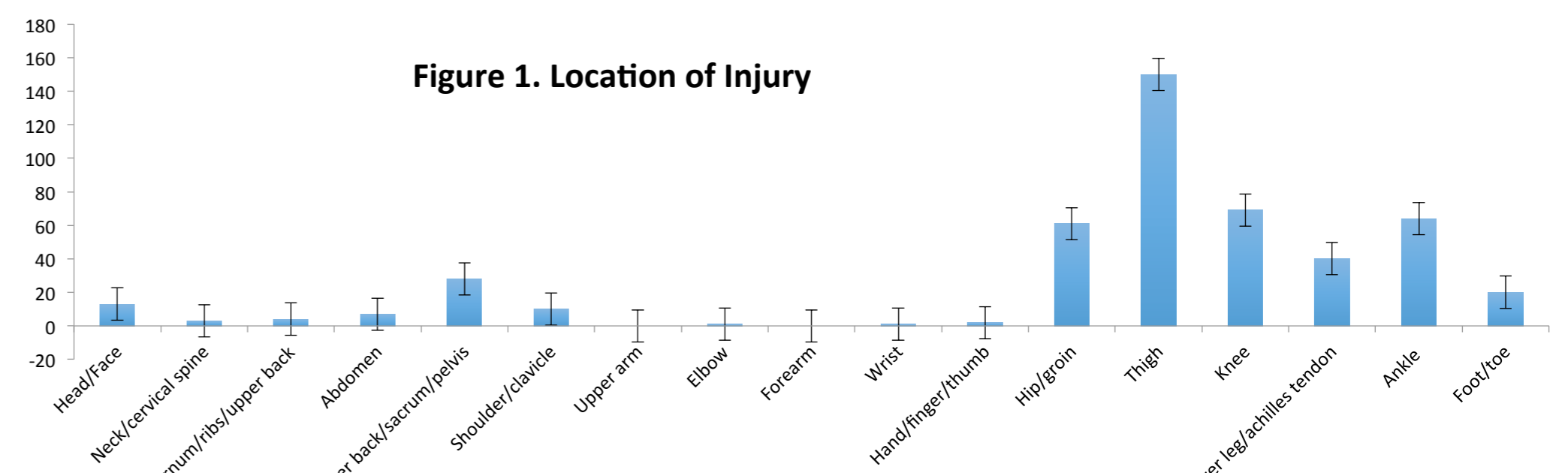
Methods

Following University ethical approval, 10 English professional football clubs were recruited during the 2015-16 season. The study was conducted in accordance with the consensus statement on injury definitions and data collection procedures in football².

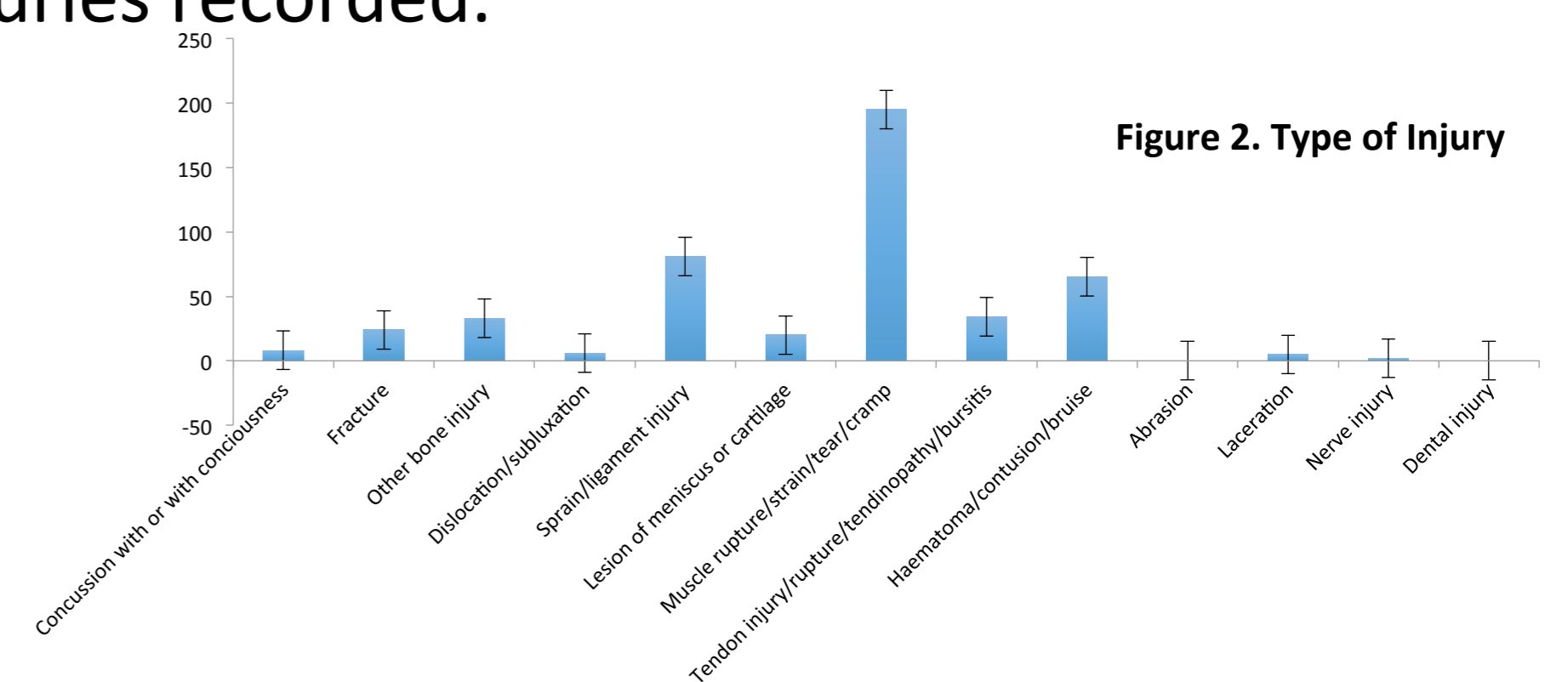
Results

Table 1 Exposure and injury data in English professional football players

Exposure Data	
Season exposure (hours)	52181
Season training exposure	42498.3
Season match exposure	9682.7
Overall injury data	
Total injuries, n	473
Injury incidence (/1000 hours), total	9.2
Injury incidence, training (/1000 hours)	5.2
Injury incidence, match play (/1000 hours)	25.3



The thigh region was the most common site of injury 31.7%, followed by the knee (14.6%) and ankle (13.5%). Muscle strains accounted for 41.2% of all injuries. Hamstring muscle strains were reported to be the most commonly diagnosed injury at 16.3%. Of the 77 hamstring strains sustained, 51.9% were sustained during match play and 62.3% were classified as moderate in severity (8-28 days injured). A total of 27.3% (21/77) were re-injuries. Re-injuries constituted for 16.9% of all injuries recorded.



Moderate injuries (8-28 days) were the highest in incidence at 44.2%

Conclusions

This study was the first to report injury incidence and prevalence of English professional football players in the last 16 years. The findings highlight injury risk figures have increased, whilst hamstring muscle injuries remain the most common injuries sustained. The increase in re-injuries is important for medical departments to consider when making decisions on return to play following initial injury.

1 Hawkins, R.D., Hulse, M.A., Wilkinson, C., Hodson, A. and Gibson, M., 2001. The association football medical research programme: an audit of injuries in professional football. *British journal of sports medicine*, 35(1), pp. 43-47.
2 Fuller, C.W., Ekstrand, J., Junge, A., Andersen, T.E., Bahr, R., Dvorak, J., Hägglund, M., McCrory, P. and Meeuwisse, W.H., 2006. Consensus statement on injury definitions and data collection procedures in studies of football (soccer) injuries. *Scandinavian journal of medicine & science in sports*, 16(2), pp.83-92.