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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure Data</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Season exposure (hours)</td>
<td>52181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season training exposure</td>
<td>42498.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season match exposure</td>
<td>9682.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall injury data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Injuries, n</th>
<th>473</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Injury incidence (1/1000 hours), total</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury incidence, training (1/1000 hours)</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury incidence, match play (1/1000 hours)</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.