INJURY INCIDENCE IN FOOTBALL CODE ATHLETES DURING PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD MASTERS GAMES

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Keywords: injury, masters football

Introduction

There is growing evidence that physical activity across the lifespan is beneficial for improved health[1-3]. However older athletes may display an increased range of pathologies and physiological changes due to the aging process[2,4,5]. These factors may result in increased injury risks, particularly when participating in highly competitive sport. The World Masters Games (WMG) is the largest international sporting competition in terms of participant numbers. Yet this cohort of athletes remains proportionately under investigated. It was hypothesized that injury trends would be similar in incidence and location to a comparative (elite soccer) population.

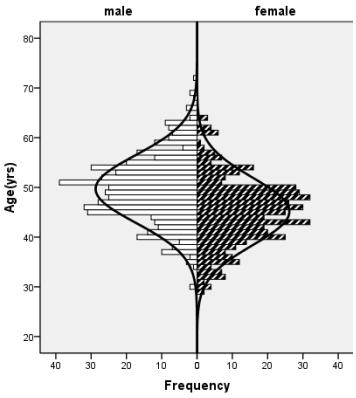
Methods

An online survey was utilized to investigate the 2009 Sydney WMG football code athletes (soccer, touch football, rugby union).

Results & Discussion

931 masters athletes (Age 29-72, $\bar{x}$=47.6, s=7.1, 52.5% male, 47.5% female) participated. Analysis (t-tests, chi square) confirmed hypothesized trends in injury location ($p<0.01$) and classification ($p<0.01$). The incidence of injury in Sydney WMG masters football athletes during the years of tournament preparation and competition was not greater than comparative (general and competitive) populations.

Figure 1: Population pyramid displaying distribution of injured athletes



Conclusion

Findings show similarities in location ($p<0.01$) and injury type ($p<0.01$) to a comparative population, additionally findings did not support increased injury risks for masters athletes competing in football codes.

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