

EFFECT OF A NATIONWIDE INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM ON HEAD INJURIES IN JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOL RUGBY PLAYERS

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Introduction

This study is to investigate the effect of a nationwide Japanese rugby injury prevention program on the frequency of head injuries in Japanese high school rugby players.

Methods

Comparing the number of severe head injuries due to participation in rugby union occurring in 2005-2007, with the number of head injuries in 2008-2010. A questionnaire-based survey was administered to high school rugby players who participated in the national high school championship tournament; the questions were designed to determine the extent of their knowledge of existing concussion return to play guidelines and to investigate the high school players' understanding and attitudes towards those guidelines.

Results

The number of severe head injuries that occurred in 2008-2010 has decreased compared with 2005-2007. A total of 1256 male players were surveyed, and 1256 responded (response rate 100%). 36.3% were aware of concussion guidelines, and 8.2% identified the mandated stand down period as determined by the regulations governing rugby football.

Conclusion

This study showed a limited knowledge of the concussion guidelines among Japanese high school rugby players revealing that most of the players do not follow the regulations of the International Rugby Board. This indicates that the Japanese rugby injury prevention program needs an increased focus on concussion management education for coaches and players.