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Knowledge and attitudes on prevention of sports injuries among professional male athletes of division A rugby clubs in Sri Lanka

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Background: Rugby is a high impact sport. Having a good knowledge and attitudes are essential for rugby players to minimize the risk of injuries.

Objective: To describe the level of knowledge and attitudes on prevention of sports injuries among the rugby players of division A rugby clubs.

Method: A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted among a conveniently selected 250 sample of >19 years old male rugby players of eight clubs in division A with over one year experience. An online self-administered questionnaire was developed after a thorough literature search containing a 14-item knowledge scale and a 12-item attitude scale. Total scores were then converted to a 100-point scale and categorized into three groups based on quartiles. Data was analyzed using SPSS software version 15.0. Chi-squared test and independent t-test were used and $p < 0.05$ was considered as significant.

Results: Mean age was 24.6 ± 3.4 years. Experience in playing rugby ranged from 1-17 years. Knowledge scores ranged from 38.6-79.7. Cut off scores for poor and good knowledge were < 58.1 (1st quartile) and > 68.9 (3rd quartile). Out of the respondents, 26.4% had ‘Good’ knowledge and 25.6% had positive attitudes on prevention of sports injuries. Usage of harmful substances had a significant negative association with attitudes ($\chi^2 = 8.79$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.012$) while playing experience ($\chi^2 = 16.69$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.01$), participation in school rugby ($\chi^2 = 13.29$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.01$) and educational status ($\chi^2 = 13.92$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.008$) had significant positive associations with level of knowledge on injury prevention.

Conclusion: The majority of rugby players have a fair knowledge regarding prevention of sport injuries. However, their attitude was neutral indicating that they were not keen to follow what they know. Thus, measures should be taken to educate them on the importance of injury prevention for their own sports career.