

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

DETERMINING THE PREVALENCE AND ASSESSING THE SEVERITY OF INJURIES IN MIXED MARTIAL ARTS ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT

Background. Mixed martial arts (MMA) is currently the fastest growing sport in the United States and has recently surpassed boxing as the most popular full contact sport. Due to the physical nature of the sport, MMA is associated with various types of injuries.

Objective. The purpose of this study was aimed at identifying prevalence and assessing the severity, location, and type of injuries in MMA athletes sustained during MMA related activities in the twelve month period prior to the survey.

Methods. A total of fifty-five subjects between the ages of 18 to 39 participated in the study. Participants were given a two-part questionnaire to collect demographic and injury data.

Results. Two hundred seven injuries were reported in the study. Low belt ranks had significantly more injuries more than any other belt rank, resulting in more than two times higher injury rate. Professional fighters had significantly more injuries than amateur fighters, resulting in three times higher injury rate. The most common body region injured was the head/neck/face (38.2%), followed by the lower extremities (30.4%), upper extremities (22.7%), torso (8.2%), and groin (0.5%). Injuries to the nose (6.3%), shoulder (6.3%), and toe (6.3%) were the most common. The most common type of injury was contusions (29.4%), followed by strains (16.2%), sprains (14.9%), and abrasions (10.1%).

Conclusion. Injury prevention efforts should consider the prevalence and distribution of injuries and focus on reducing or preventing injuries to the head/neck/face in MMA related activities. Preventative measures should focus on improving protective equipment during training, and possible competition rule modifications to further minimize participant injury.

Keywords: sports injuries, mixed martial arts, MMA, combat sports

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