

INJURIES IN FIRST YEAR PERFORMING ARTS STUDENTS

JH Stubbe^{1,2}, AMC van Beijsterveldt^{2,3}, S Steemers¹, A Radier¹, J Monning¹, J Slinger³, JP Stege³, SC Keizer-Hulsebosch¹

¹ Codarts University of the Arts, Rotterdam, the Netherlands

² Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, School of Sports and Nutrition, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

³ Netherlands Organization For Applied Scientific Research (TNO), Department of Life Style, Leiden, the Netherlands

Objectives: Injuries are highly disadvantageous for performing arts students, since they can lead to physical discomfort, medical treatment and absence from classes, rehearsal and performance. However, little insight exists on the injury patterns of these students. Among the possible explanations for the current lack of knowledge are the methodological challenges faced in conducting prospective studies, particularly when overuse injuries are of concern. Current methods for injury registration in performing arts may substantially underestimate the true burden of injuries due to a reliance on medical attention injury definitions. The purpose of this study is to investigate the magnitude and nature of injury problems in 1st year performing arts students (dance and music) of the Codarts University of the Arts.

Design: A prospective cohort design.

Methods: During the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015 1st year performing arts students received the OSTRC Overuse Injury Questionnaire every two weeks. The online questionnaire was developed and validated in a 13-week prospective study of injuries among 313 athletes from five different sports (Clarsen et al., 2012). Furthermore, all medical attention injuries were registered by two physiotherapists.

Results: A total of 90 students filled in the questionnaires (36% male; mean age = 18,9 years). Preliminary results show that 410 questionnaires were filled in during the first semester. In 56% of these questionnaires (N=228) difficulties participating in performing arts due to injury, illness or other (mental or physical) health problems were reported. The consequences of the indicated difficulties were reduced volume of activities (35%) and reduced performance (42%). The average severity score of all self-reported problems was 36 (on a 0-100 scale). Injuries were the most prevalent types of the mentioned health problems (44%). Forty-two students reported a total of 101 injuries. The most common injury locations were knee (25%), lower leg (front) (12%), hip (11%) and vocal cords (10%). A total of 49 physiotherapy treatments were registered.

Conclusions: Performing arts students have a high injury risk during their first year of education.

Relevance for dance and music medicine: Standard injury surveillance methods only capture a small percentage of the injury problems affecting dance students, because few problems led to medical treatment. The new method, which was already validated and used in sports injury research, captured a more complete picture of the burden of injuries in this cohort.