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Prevalence of Knee Injury in Hockey Players: A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews

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ABSTRACT

Knee injuries are among the most common and debilitating musculoskeletal injuries in hockey players. Understanding their prevalence is crucial for developing preventive strategies and improving player health and performance.This systematic review of systematic reviews aims to summarise and synthesise existing evidence on the prevalence of knee injuries in hockey players across different levels of play. A comprehensive literature search was conducted across major electronic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and the Cochrane Library, to identify systematic reviews published up to 2025. Studies were included if they reported on the prevalence of knee injuries in hockey players and met predefined inclusion criteria. Data were extracted and synthesised to provide an overview of injury rates, risk factors, and variations across player demographics, playing levels, and playing surfaces. Four systematic reviews, with AMSTAR scores between 6 and 11, highlighted a higher risk of knee injuries in elite field hockey players, especially on artificial turf. Injury rates ranged from 4.5 to 57.9 per 1000 player-hours, with a pooled rate of 48.1 per 1000 player-hours for injuries requiring medical attention. ACL injuries were more common in females (63%) than males (50%), mainly from non-contact incidents. Contact injuries dominate in tournaments, while non-contact injuries are more frequent in regular play. Common injuries include ligament sprains, meniscal tears, and strains, with risk factors such as high-intensity play, poor conditioning, and previous injuries. This systematic review of systematic reviews highlights the significant burden of knee injuries in hockey players. Findings underscore the need for targeted prevention strategies, such as injury prevention programmes focussing on neuromuscular training and improved protective equipment. Further research is recommended to address gaps in understanding the influence of gender, playing surface, and age on knee injury prevalence.

Keywords: Field hockey, Injury prevalence, Knee risk factor.