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ASSESSMENT OF SPORTS INJURIES PREVENTION AMONG PLAYERS OF PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL CLUBS IN OYO STATE

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Abstract

This study assessed sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs players in Oyo state. The research investigated the extent to which dependent variables such as muscle strength of players, the use of protective equipment player position and foul play regulation influence injuries prevention amongst professional club players in Oyo state. Descriptive research design of survey method was adopted for the study. Instrument for data collection was self-structured questionnaire. A draft of the questionnaire was given to three lecturers in Human Kinetics Education, University of Ilorin and Department of Kinesiology and Health Education, Kwara State University, Malete for validation, their comments were incorporated into the administered questionnaire. The reliability of instrument was carried out using test re-test method. The instrument was administered professional players of Bukola Babes FC, Ilorin and Kwara United Football Club. The results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic, coefficient r=0.65 was obtained as the reliability of the instrument. Random sampling and proportionate sampling techniques were used. A total of 100 respondents formed the sample size. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage for demographic information and inferential statistic of Chi-Square (X^2) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

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The findings revealed that: players muscle strength has significant influence on injury prevention (X^2 = 82.1 > 16.92;p=0.05), protective equipment has significant influence on injury prevention (X^2 = 89.9 > 6.92; p=0.05), player position has significant influence on injury prevention (X^2 = 75.3 > 6.92; p=0.05) and foul play regulation has significant influence on injury prevention (X^2 = 41.4 > 16.92; p=0.05)

The study concluded that muscle strength of players, the use of protective equipment playing position and foul play regulations influence injuries prevention amongst professional club players in Oyo state. Recommendations were therefore made that; players should work on their muscle strength so as to consistently increase their resistance to injury, players should make use of protective equipment during play to reduce injuries, plays should be retained in appropriate positions that suit their ability so as to reduce stress and fatigue to prevent injuries while fair play regulations should be well implemented and observed by the players.

Keywords: Sports injuries, football clubs, equipments, health benefits

Introduction

Sporting activity has become a worldwide activity that has participants in all parts of the world. Just like any other occupation or activities, sporting activities have their own occupational hazard. In football, injury is the major hazard associated with the sport. Sport injuries refer to any physical damage that occur to body part during sport related activities while sport injuries prevention refer to things done to avoid contacting sport injury. Warburton, Nicol and Bredin. (2006) claimed that participating in physical activity/sport has multiple health benefits, such as reducing risks for chronic diseases and mortality. However, despite the health benefits derive in sport there is also the risk of contracting injury from sport. Ristolainen (2012) asserts that, to a certain extent, there is a close-response relationship between regular exercise and health benefits. However, vigorous sports -related training can also include disadvantages and even health risks due to increasing risk of getting injured. According to Askling, Karlsson and Thorstensson (2003) sport related injuries affect the injured player's health negatively and may cause permanent disability or even terminate the player sports career. The author, explain further that injuries also place a burden on the health care system as the treatment of sports injuries is often demanding, expensive and time-consuming.

Due to the physical, fast pace and semi-contact nature of sport, injuries are regular occurrences. Participating in sports on a regular basis is considered a vital

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component of an active and healthy lifestyle however, Schmikli, de Vries and Inklaar (2011), claimed there is high potential of musculoskeletal injuries. To some extent, occurrence of sports injuries are unavoidable, with the incidence rate of football injuries ranking among the highest of all sports injuries, particularly in adult male football players (Schmikli, *et al.*, 2011). However, promotion of a physically active lifestyle is encouraged worldwide, particularly with regard to its numerous health benefits. Football injuries have been conceptualized by Junge (2000), to be any musculoskeletal complaint (including concussion) incurred during a match that received medical attention from the team physician regardless of the consequences with respect to absence from the match or training." Dvorak and Junge (2000) also classify football injury based on the cause of the injury. These classifications are as follows;

- Direct injury is caused by an external blow or force. It could also be as a result of collision with another person (for example, during a tackle in match), being struck with an object, injuries that result from external forces include haematomas, bruises, joint, ligament damage, dislocations and bone fractures.
- An indirect injury can occur in two ways, actual injury can occur some distance from the impact site, falling on an outstretched can result in a dislocated shoulder. The injury does not occur through physical contact with an object or person except from internal forces by the actions of the performer, such over-stretching, poor technique, fatigue, lack of fitness. Ligament sprains muscle strains, and tears. (Bahr, 2016).
- Injuries occur when excessive and repetitive force is placed on the bones and other connective tissues of the body, little or no pain might be experienced in the early stages of these injuries and the player continue to place pressure on the injured site. The prevention given the injuries time to heal up, the damage accumulates; the injured site becomes inflamed and painful. The symptoms of overuse muscles often occur when there is a change in training pattern (such as increasing training frequency or intensity), and the body is unable to deal with the new stresses that are placed upon it. A large number of overuse muscles results from poorly planned training programs in which the player is not given appropriate time to recover between intense sessions (Henry, Evans, Snodgrass, Miller & Callister, 2016).

Following an increasing awareness of the negative aspects of football participation, there has in recent years been an equivalent increase in the research on injury prevention. A recent study has evaluated a spectrum of prevention approaches ranging from protective headgear, balance training, eccentric hamstring strength training, video-based awareness and multi-faceted exercise programs

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(Bahr & Krosshaug 2005). Hence, to better prevent injuries, it is crucial to understand the factors that influence players, coaches, and sports administrators to accept, adopt, and comply with the elements of the intervention.

Injury prevention programmes refers to plan of actions engaged in, in order to prevent injury occurrence (Finch, Braham, McIntosh, McCrory & Wolfe, 2006). Intervention programs of sports injury prevention research can be divided into three categories: equipment, training and regulatory interventions. Earlier, equipment interventions were more commonly studied whereas recent studies have been focusing on training interventions.

Other commonly used equipment were head/face protectors and attenuating devices, such as shock absorbing insoles. Of the training interventions, most of them have been studied from the point of view of balance and coordination, but more recently an increasing amount of strength, power and stretching interventions have also been examined. According to Kucera, Marshall, Kirkendall, Marchak and Garrett-Jr (2005), muscle conditioning, and particularly resistance training, constitutes a significant part of football training, especially during the pre-season preparation period. Strengthening the muscle and connective tissues is believed to result in fewer muscle injuries. Junge and Dvorak (2004), claimed that reduced muscle strength or muscle imbalance are commonly proposed risk factors for injury.

According to Martin, Oliver and McCaughtry, (2007), muscle conditioning and particularly resistance training, constitutes a significant part of football training, especially during the pre-season preparation. Bahr (2016) reported that study on the association between isokinetic muscle strength tests and injury failed to show an association or contradicting result. One reason could be that these tests probably have little correlation with muscle functions required in football. However, the benefit of strength training has been shown in a population of male elite football players who fewer hamstring injuries after performing specific hamstring strengthening exercises (Martin et al., 2007).

Protective playing equipment could also be a major contributory factor to sports injury. Dvorak and Junge (2000) asserted that failure to wear shin guards may increase the incidence of lower leg injuries and using substandard foot wears may also predispose athletes to injuries. This has been found to reduce the risk of concussions and injuries to face in female players. Also, players might engage in unfair challenges, intentionally on their counterparts and this might result in injury. According to Andersen, Bahr, Dvorak, Hagglund, McCrory and Meeuwisse (2006). foul play has been attributed to result in injuries. Foul play is thus a considerable risk factor which requires focus on the attitude of players.

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Morgan and Oberlander (2001) reported that there was no association between playing position and injury occurrence. Studies by Andersen et al., (2006) have shown conflicting results, they reported that strikers/forward players were more susceptible to injuries than those playing other positions. Arnason, Andersen, Holme and Bahr (2007) reported that midfielders had the highest risk of injury.

Sport activities have developed to become global event that involves lots of participants from audience, players, and governments among others (Bahr & Krosshaug 2005). Despite the development of sport activities, the researcher observed that problem of sport injury have tendency to jeopardize professional player career. Players in Nigeria league do not enjoy similar treatment like foreign country where injured player can receive best medical treatment to hastening their recovery. Aside the pain and duration of recovery from injury player do suffer, the entire team performance are also affected when a team lose their valuable player to injury. The side effect of injury on players recovery and team performance make its prevention more important, hence the researcher is interested in how football clubs manage their players injuries prevention by assessing the influence of player muscle strength, protective equipment, playing position and foul play regulation on sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs in Oyo state.

Statement of the Problem

Sporting activities have a great impact on athletes performance, sport became global events that involves a lot of participants. Despite the advancements in sports science and medicine, the researcher observed that problem of sport injuries have tendency to jeopardize professional players, career. Some player in Nigeria league do not enjoy adequate treatment like foreign player in other country, where the player with injuries in foreign countries receive better medical treatment to fasten their recovery.

Apart from pain and duration experiences during the period of recovery, most of the valuable players do suffer a lot from the injuries and it affect their performance during the season. The side effect of injury on players recovery and teams performance make its prevention more importance. This prompted the researchers to assess how football clubs manage their players injuries and how to prevent further damages, by assessing the influence équipment, playing position and foul play regulation on sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs in Oyo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

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1. Will players muscle strength prevent sports injuries among professional football players in Oyo state?
2. Will equipment prevent sports injuries among professional football players in Oyo state?
3. Will foul play regulation prevent sports injuries among professional football players in Oyo state?
4. Will playing position prevent sports injuries among professional football players in Oyo state?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated for the study;

1. Players muscle strength will not significantly prevent sports injuries among professional football players in Oyo state?
2. Equipment will not significantly prevent sports injuries among professional football players in Oyo state?
3. Foul play regulation will not significantly prevent on sports injuries among professional football players in Oyo state?
4. Playing position will not significantly prevent on sports injuries among professional football players in Oyo state?

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey method. This design was considered appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to collect personal and general information for the purpose of explaining sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs in Oyo state. The population for the study comprise of all professional football players of football clubs in Oyo State. There are 4 registered professional clubs in Oyo state namely; shooting stars, Divine soccer school, Thank you Jesus and soccer training academy with over 166 professional players. Simple random sampling was used to select four (4) football clubs for the study. After which proportionate sampling technique was used to select sixty percent (60%) sample size from the166 professional players in the four clubs to make 100 respondents.

The research instrument used for the study was a self-structured questionnaire of likert rating scale consisting of structured items, eliciting information from respondents on the sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs in Oyo State. To ensure validity of instrument, a drafted questionnaire by the researcher was given to 3 lecturers in the Department of Human Kinetics

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Education, University of Ilorin for validation. Their comments and corrections were incorporated in the instrument before administration. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using test re-test method. The instrument was administered to 30 professional players of Bukola Babes Football Club Ilorin, Kwara State twice at two weeks interval. The result was correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic. A correlation co-efficient of 0.65r was obtained which was high enough to be used for the study. The consent of each football club administrator was sought before the administration of the instrument to the players. The researchers with two (2) trained research assistants administered the questionnaire. The administered instrument was collected immediately to record high retrieval rate.

Frequency count and percentage was used to analyse demographic variables of the respondents while inferential statistic of Chi-square was employed to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by Demographic Data in Percentages

S/N	VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Gender		
	Male	67	67
	Female	33	33
	TOTAL	100	100.0
2	Age Range		
	21-30 old years	41	41
	31-40 old years	33	33
	41- years old and above	26	26
	TOTAL	**100**	**100**

Table one showed that 67 (67%) of the respondents were male while 33(33%) are female. Also, 41 (41%) of the respondents were between 21-30years old 33 (33%) were 31-40years old while 26(26%) were 41years old and above.

Hypotheses Testing

HO_1: Muscle strength will not significantly prevent sport injuries among professional players in Oyo state.

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Table 2: Chi-square analysis on muscle strength and prevention of sport injuries among professional players in Oyo state

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. Value	df	Table Value	Remark
1	Building players muscle strength as a preventive measure reduces occurrence of sports injuries among professional football players.	45 (45%)	43 (43%)	7 (7%)	5 (5.0%)	100				
2	Stretching exercises reduces sports injuries among professional football players	17 (17%)	75 (75%)	4 (6.7%)	4 (3.3%)	100				
3	Medical examination of player muscle for fitness assist in sports injuries prevention among professional football players	16 (16%)	77 (77%)	7 (7%)	0 (0%)	100	82.1	9	16.9	Ho Rejected
4	Allowing players with weak muscle strength to rest before playing will prevent injuries among professional football players	63 (63%)	32 (32%)	5 (5.0%)	0 (0%)	100				
	Column Total	**141 (35%)**	**227 (57%)**	**23 (6%)**	**9 (2%)**	**400**				

P < 0.05 alpha level

Table two shows that 35 (35%) of the respondents strongly agreed that muscle strength has significant influence on sport injuries prevention among sport professional clubs in Oyo state, 57 (57%) agreed 6 (6%) disagreed while 2 (2%) strongly disagreed. Also, the calculated Chi-square value was 82.1 and the table value was 16.92 with the degree of freedom of 9 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This

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implies that good muscle strength enhance sports injuries prevention among sport professional players in Oyo state.

HO_2: Equipment will not significantly prevent sport injuries among sport professional players in Oyo state.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis on equipment and sport injuries among sport professional players in Oyo state

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. Value	df	Table Value	Remark
5	Use of Knee pads may help prevent sports injuries among professional football clubs	36 (36%)	48 (48%)	7 (7%)	9 (90%)	100				
6	Use of helmet to prevent head injury may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	17 (17%)	69 (69%)	7 (7%)	7 (7%)	100				
7	Use of elbow pad may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	10 (10%)	83 (83%)	7 (7%)	0 (0%)	100	89.9	9	16.92	Ho Rejected
8	Selection of foot wears base on pitch may enhance sports injuries prevention among. professional football clubs	57 (57)	25 (25%)	6 (6%)	12 (12%)	100				
	Column Total	**120 (30%)**	**225 (56.3%)**	**27 (6.7%)**	**28 (7%)**	**400**				

$P < 0.05$ alpha level

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Table three shows that (30%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Protective equipment has significant influence on sport injuries prevention among sport professional clubs in Oyo state, 56.3 (56.3%) agreed, 6.7 (6.7%) disagreed while 7 (7%) strongly disagreed. Moreover, the calculated Chi-square value was 89.9 while the table value was 16.92 with the degree of freedom of 9 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the use of protective equipment enhance sports injuries prevention among sport professional players in Oyo state.

HO_3: Player position will not significantly prevent sport injuries among sport professional players in Oyo state.

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Table 4: Chi-square analysis on players' position and sport injuries among sport professional players in Oyo state

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. Value	Df	Table Value	Remark
9	Putting player in less difficult positions on the field may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	34 (34%)	44 (44%)	14 (14%)	8 (8%)	100				
10	Change in game plan depending on opposition tactics to favour injured players may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	28 (28%)	56 (56%)	8 (8%)	8 (8%)	100				
11	Selection of players for competitive match based on opposition strength may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	13 (13%)	77 (77%)	9 (9%)	1 (1%)	100	75.3	9	16.92	Ho Rejected
12	Continuous rotation of player position in a match to reduce exposure to injury may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	59 (59%)	25 (25%)	4 (4%)	12 (12%)	100				
	Column Total	**134 (33.5%)**	**202 (50.5%)**	**35 (8.8%)**	**29 (7.3%)**	**400**				

$P < 0.05$ alpha level

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Table four shows that 33.5 (33.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that player position has significant influence on sport injuries prevention among sport professional clubs in Oyo state, 50.5 (50.5%) agreed, 8.8 (8.8%) disagreed while 7.3 (7.3%) strongly disagreed. Also, the calculated Chi-square value was 75.5 while the table value was 16.92 with the degree of freedom of 9 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that player position enhance sports injuries prevention among sport professional players in Oyo state.

HO_4: Foul play rule will not significantly prevent sport injuries among sport professional players in Oyo state.

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Table 5: Chi-square analysis on foul play rule and sport injuries among sport professional players in Oyo state

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Row Total	Cal. Value	df	Table Value	Remark
13	Emphasizing on fair game may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	29 (29%)	52 (52%)	11 (11%)	8 (8%)	100				
14	Strict disciplinary action against foul play may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	25 (25%)	59 (59%)	8 (8%)	8 (8%)	100				
15	Emphasizing more on tactical playing pattern over physical pattern may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	21 (21%)	67 (67%)	11 (11%)	1 (1%)	100	41.4	9	16.92	Ho Rejected
16	Ensuring of friendship with opposition teams to reduce foul play may enhance sports injuries prevention among professional football clubs	51 (51%)	31 (31%)	6 (6%)	12 (12%)	100				
	Column Total	**126**	**209**	**36**	**39**	**400**				

P < 0.05 alpha level

Table five indicated that 31.5 (31.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that foul play rule has no significant influence on sport injuries prevention among sport professional clubs in Oyo state, 49.7 (49.7%) agreed, 9(9%) disagreed while 9.8 (9.8%) strongly disagreed. Also, the calculated Chi-square value was 41.4 while the table value was 16.92 with the degree of freedom of 9 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the

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calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that foul play rule enhance sports injuries prevention among sport professional clubs in Oyo state.

Discussion of Findings

The tested hypothesis one revealed that players muscle strength enhance sports injuries prevention among sport professional clubs in Oyo state. This finding corroborates the assertion of Kucera, Marshall, Kirkendall, Marchak, and Garrett (2005) who stated that muscle conditioning, and particularly resistance training constitutes a significant part of football training. Strengthening the muscle and connective tissues is believed to result in reduction of injuries. Junge and Dvorak (2004) also affirmed that reduced muscle strength or muscle imbalance are commonly associated with risk factors for injury.

The tested hypothesis two revealed that the use of protective equipment enhance sports injuries prevention among sport professional club in Oyo state. The result of this study is in agreement with the findings of Dvorak and Junge (2000) who reported that failure to wear shin guards may increase the incidence of lower leg injuries and using bad-quality footwear may also predispose player/athletes to injury. Withnall, Shewchenko, Wonnacott and Dvorak (2005), also affirmed that specific headgear may be of benefit in head-to-head impacts, but are rarely used.

Tested hypothesis three revealed that player position enhances sports injuries prevention among sport professional club in Oyo state. This finding is in line with that of Morgan and Oberlander (2001) who asserted that strikers/forward are more susceptible to injury than other players. Arnason, et al., (2007) also reported higher injury rates among strikers and defenders compared to midfielders and goalkeepers while Askling, Karlsson and Thorstensson (2003) in their studies found that midfielders had the highest risk for injury.

The tested hypothesis four revealed that foul play regulations enhance sports injuries prevention among sport professional club in Oyo state. This finding corroborates with the findings of Junge (2000) who conclude that foul play result in match injuries. Also, Andersen, *et al.*, (2006) confirmed that foul play is a considerable risk factor for injury, and the attitudes of players should be a focus of attention.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Player muscle strength is an important factor for injury prevention among professional club players in Oyo state.

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2. The use of protective equipment has significant influence on injury prevention among professional club players in Oyo
3. Player position is an important component of injury prevention among professional club players in Oyo state.
4. Foul play regulation is vital to injury prevention among professional club players in Oyo state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following were recommended:

1. Player should work on their muscle strength so as to increase their resistance to injury
2. Players should make use of protective equipment's during the game and training
3. Players should be put in appropriate position that suit their ability so as to reduce stress and fatigue to reduce the rate of injury.
4. Fair play regulation should be well implemented.

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