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**EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY OF INJURY AND ILLNESS IN GREAT BRITAIN SHORT-TRACK SPEED SKATING**

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**Background** Prevention of injury and illness in elite sport can have not only athlete health benefits but also potential positive performance gains. As the first step towards prevention, valid injury/illness surveillance data is needed.

**Objective** Provide injury/illness epidemiology information on the Great Britain (GB) short-track speed skating squad.

**Design** Longitudinal prospective surveillance study, recording injury/illness, and training/competition exposure data. Definitions for injury/illness, time-loss and performance-restriction were used

## Abstracts

to identify the rate and severity of athlete injuries/illnesses.

**Setting** GB short-track speed skating National training centre, including domestic and international training/competition venues during the 2009/2010 season.

**Participants** 11 (7 male; 4 female) National team athletes.

**Interventions** Standardised report forms for injuries/illnesses were completed by medical, and competition/training exposure by coaching, support staff.

**Main outcome measure** Injury/illness rate, severity and causes.

**Results** There were 14 training (2.7/1000 athlete training hrs) and 2 competition (13/100 competition starts) injuries, and 12 illnesses. Equating 64% and 73% of the squad suffering at least one injury/illness, with 29 days and 5 days lost per injury/illness, respectively. Injuries to the thigh (38%), lumbar spine and knee (19% each) were most common, with 8, 19, and 43 days lost per injury, respectively. Overuse (gradual/sudden-onset: 38%), non-contact trauma (31%) and contact – static object (25%) were the most common causes of injury, with contact – static object (59d) and overuse (33d) most severe. Upper respiratory tract infection was the most common illness (75%), occurring more frequently around periods of competition and long haul travel.

**Conclusions** Injury and illness seasonal prevalence was similar, but severity greater for injuries. Prevention initiatives targeting common and severe injuries/illnesses may be beneficial in reducing the number of athlete days lost to training/competition.



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