Background Cricket is one of the most popular sports worldwide. However, the risk of hand injuries is high. For example, batters can be struck, wicketkeepers must catch the fast-moving ball, and fielders might dive to stop the ball. In retired elite cricketers, previous search shows 36% report severe hand injury, and this is associated with pain (20%) and osteoarthritis (2%). Hand osteoarthritis is known to decrease quality of life, and increase morbidity. The majority of cricketers are recreational players. However, the epidemiological data on cricket-related hand injuries are under reported in this population. This data are needed to inform development of evidence-based injury prevention programmes.

Objective Present the first comprehensive epidemiological profile of hospital treated cricket-related hand injuries from 2013–14 to 2017–18 in Victoria, Australia.

Design Retrospective analysis of routinely collected hospital presentation data (detailed case-series).

Setting De-identified hospital-treatment data from two hospital databases: Victorian Emergency Minimum Dataset (ED-presentations) and Victorian Admitted Episodes Dataset (hospital-admissions), were obtained from the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit.

Participants Male and female cricketers.

Main Outcome Measurements Incidence and description of ED-presentations and hospital-admissions.

Results 2,415 cases (1,960 ED-presentations) were treated in Victorian hospitals. 96% of cases were male. All (n=445) hospital-admissions were for one day. Most frequent ED-presentations were in the -15 year age group, whilst the 25–29 year age group reported most frequent hospital-admissions. Fractures (48% ED-presentations versus 73% hospital-admissions) were the commonest injury type. Thumb injuries (17%) were most frequently treated in EDs. The most common injury mechanism was being hit/stuck/crushed (84% ED-presentations versus 79% hospital admissions).

Conclusions Cricket-related hand injuries are more frequent in younger players. Fractures are the most common type of injury, accounting for half of all ED-presentations. Fractures are also the most severe injury, accounting for 3 out of 4 hospital admissions. Hand injury prevention strategies need to be prioritised in recreational cricketers.