BARRIERS TO WRIST PROTECTOR USE IN SWISS SNOWBOARDERS
Flavia Buergi, Philip Demer, Steffen Niemann, Othmar Bruegger. BFU – Swiss Council for Accident Prevention, Bern, Switzerland

Background Wrist injuries are the most common type of injury sustained while snowboarding, with 2500 Swiss snowboarders injuring their wrist or forearm annually. The effectiveness of wrist protectors in preventing these injuries is scientifically proven, yet the use of wrist protectors has decreased 17% over the last 10 years, to 25% in 2018.

Objective To identify barriers to the use of wrist protectors among Swiss snowboarders in order to promote their use in the future via specific measures.

Design Face-to-face interviews were conducted on the slopes of 21 ski resorts in Switzerland in the 2017/18 winter season using a standardized questionnaire including information about demographics, snowboarding skills, and snowboarders’ behaviour regarding the use of wrist protectors.

Setting Recreational sport.

Participants 721 snowboarders (mean age: 28±9.1 years, 34% females) residing in Switzerland (aged ≥15 years) were included in the study. The response rate was 79%.

Main Outcome Measurements The prevalence of and barriers to wrist protector use.

Results In this study, a total of 16% of the snowboarders used wrist protectors. We found a difference between adolescents (15–17 years) and adults (≥18 years): 28% vs. 15% (p=0.001). However, no difference was found concerning sex or skill level. The most important barriers to the use of wrist protectors were a belief that they increase injury risk (22%), that they aren’t effective (18%), or that they are uncomfortable (16%).

Conclusions In Switzerland, snowboarders are badly informed about the efficacy of wrist protectors and a minority of snowboarders use them. Therefore, further efforts will be taken in Switzerland to adequately inform non-users. Future prevention measures are planned to ensure that only effective protectors are available on the market and to target the lack of knowledge among snowboarders and suppliers.