WHAT ARE THE MAIN RISK FACTORS FOR LOWER-EXTREMITY RUNNING-RELATED INJURIES? A RETROSPECTIVE SURVEY-BASED ON 3669 RESPONDENTS
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Background Many studies attempt to identify the risk factors for running-related injuries (RRI), but these are not yet well established.

Objectives To investigate the risk factors of RRI.

Design Retrospective online survey-based study among population of runners injured and non-injured.

Setting Leisure road and trail runners

Patients Participants have to be at least 18 years old and have to practice running at least for 12 months. 3669 runners reported information which were included for statistical analysis.

Assessment of Risk Factors The online survey included 41 questions with five main categories: personal characteristics – practice running at least for 12 months. 3669 runners completed the survey.

Interventions (or Assessment of Risk Factors) Demographics including age, gender, experience and training history.

Results The average age of respondents was 40.9y (range 18–83y) and 54.1% were male. 22.3% of respondents developed a new illness in the 4 weeks prior to the event. Upper respiratory tract infection (URT) was most common (64.3%), followed by GI problems (15.4%) and headache/migraine (14.6%). 28.5% of respondents who had been training for <2 months developed an acute illness, compared with 19.8% of those trained for >6 months (p=0.0002). Lower average weekly training distance (22.9% of those training from <20 to 40 miles/week vs. 18.7% training from 40 to >50 miles/week; p<0.05) and shorter longest training run (24.4% whose longest run was <20 miles vs. 19.4% whose longest training run was >20 miles; p<0.05) were associated with higher incidence of acute illness. 25.0% of novice runners (running <1y) developed an acute illness compared to 20.3% of those who had been running >10y (p<0.05).

Conclusions Novice runners who train for <2 months with low average weekly training mileage were more likely to develop an acute illness during marathon training than more experienced runners. Further research is needed to establish the direction and relationship between these factors before guidance can be issued.