PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TOWARDS AN INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM AMONG PROFESSIONAL MALE ICE HOCKEY PLAYERS AND STAFF MEMBERS

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Background Lower extremity injury prevention programs are effective in team sport athletes.

Objective This study identifies barriers to and facilitators for an injury prevention program in professional male ice hockey teams among players and staff members.

Design Cross-sectional survey.

Setting Professional male ice hockey teams.

Participants Eight Swiss National League A (NLA) teams and their staff members were invited to participate in the study and voluntarily completed the questionnaire. Inclusion criteria were the ability to understand German or English and signed informed consent. Six teams completed the questionnaire (148 players and 11 staff members).

Main outcome measurements Frequency of ratings related to knowledge, attitude, adherence and habits were analysed. Binary logistic regression analysis was applied to predict a relationship between players’ characteristics and positive attitude towards an injury prevention program.

Results Knowledge, perceived benefit and relevance of injury prevention as well as awareness of high risk of injuries in ice hockey were identified as important facilitators. Players’ habit of exercise performance was identified as a barrier. Program understanding of staff members was identified as a facilitator and barrier. No significant relationships were observed between a high/low perceived benefit of an injury prevention program and age (p = 0.85), gender (p = 0.53), level of education (p = 0.63), National League experience (p = 0.50) or occurrence of lower extremity injuries in the previous season (p = 0.10).

Conclusions Identified barriers and facilitators should be addressed when developing and implementing an injury prevention program in a setting of professional ice hockey teams. An injury prevention program should be offered to and implemented in players of all ages, levels of education and experience in National League, irrespective of previous injuries.