Conclusions The exercise fidelity was low with only three out of five exercises observed performed according to instructions. Only half of the total programme exercises were being executed. Only a third of coaches believed IPEP can reduce injury risk; thus current delivery strategies might be insufficient for translating evidence to this key-stakeholder group. Future work is needed to inform evidence-based strategies to better support the implementation of IPEPs in sport settings.

Background Educational workshops have been employed in football to positively influence coach perceptions towards injury risk and prevention, and to improve adherence to neuromuscular training programmes. Similar implementation strategies have been used in rugby but their effect on behaviour is unknown.

Objective To assess coaches’ perceptions towards injury risk and prevention, and to determine the effect of workshop attendance on their uptake of Activate, a rugby-specific injury prevention exercise programme.

Design Prospective cohort study.

Setting English school rugby union (under-12 to under-18).

Participants School rugby coaches and support staff (n=54).

Interventions All coaches completed a baseline questionnaire investigating their perceptions towards injury risk and prevention. Coaches were invited to attend a pre-season Activate workshop.

Main outcome measures Participants were grouped by workshop attendance (yes/no). Perceptions towards injury risk and prevention were compared at baseline, prior to workshop attendance (Mann-Whitney-U test). Coaches self-reported adoption (programme use; chi-square test) and adherence (sessions completed per week; Mann-Whitney-U test) at post-season.

Results Thirty-three of 54 coaches attended a pre-season workshop. Prior to the workshop, 72% of coaches were aware of Activate. At baseline, attendees were significantly more likely to believe that exercises shown to prevent injuries should be included in rugby training (z=-2.03, p=0.04) and completing six modules per week; z=-2.20, p=0.03).

Conclusions Coaches with stronger baseline perceptions regarding injury prevention were more likely to attend a workshop and had significantly greater programme adoption and adherence. If coach perceptions are a determinant of workshop attendance, and subsequently programme uptake, researchers and stakeholders should focus upon strategies to influence coach perceptions towards injury risk and prevention.