Infographic. The first position statement of the Concussion in Para Sport Group

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BACKGROUND

A concussion is a common injury in many sports, including para sport. Aside from a more comprehensive need for concussion education, clinicians face difficulties applying concussion assessment and management guidelines to para athletes. At present, there is a lack of para-sport concussion research, and prior International Concussion in Sport (CIS) consensus papers have not addressed this specific population. To rectify this issue and improve concussion management provided to para athletes, the Concussion in Para Sport (CIPS) multidisciplinary expert group was created.

METHODS

The CIPS group undertook an in-depth analysis of issues specific to the para athlete within the established key clinical domains of the current (2017) Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport. The existing Sports Concussion Assessment Tool 5 (SCAT5) was evaluated as part of this process and helped identify para athlete-specific concerns. Four CIPS working groups were tasked with exploring the following key clinical areas of concussion in para sport described in the most recent consensus statement of concussion in sport:

- Concussion assessment;
- Concussion management;
- Return-to-sport following concussion; and
- Specific considerations related to the different impairments in para athletes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regular preparticipation and periodic health examinations in the para athlete are essential to determine a baseline reference point for concussion symptoms but pose challenges for the interpreting clinician. Concussion in the para athlete population should be managed according to existing concussion consensus guidelines using the CIPS assessment tools (see https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/bjsports/suppl/2021/04/09/bjsports-2020-103696).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Additional challenges exist for the evaluation and management of concussion in para athletes. Looking ahead, further research is needed to develop a greater understanding of existing knowledge gaps and attitudes towards concussion among athlete medical staff, coaches and para athletes themselves. Future research should investigate the use, reliability and validity of common assessment tools in the para athlete population. Concussion prevention strategies and sport-specific rule changes, such as in Para Alpine Skiing, Cerebral Palsy Football and sports for athletes with visual impairment, should also be considered to reduce the occurrence of concussion in para athletes.


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More areas of expert consensus opinion require special attention and/or modification of these recommendations for para athletes, depending on the unique nature of impairment.

The concussion in para sport (CIPS) group undertook an in-depth analysis of issues specific to the para athlete within the established key clinical domains of the current (2017) Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport. The CIPS group was tasked to provide a framework for assessment, treatment, and return to play after sustained concussions in para athletes. The existing Sports Concussion Assessment Tool 5 (SCAT5) was evaluated as part of this process and helped identify para athlete-specific concerns. The CIPS group undertook an in-depth analysis of issues specific to the para athlete within the established key clinical domains of the current (2017) Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport. The CIPS group was tasked to provide a framework for assessment, treatment, and return to play after sustained concussions in para athletes.

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REFERENCEs


