

The Effectiveness of an Injury Prevention Workshop in Increasing Knowledge and Understanding in Grass-Root Youth Coaches

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Abstract : There are well-known challenges to implementing injury prevention training for youth players but no data are available on the knowledge and understanding of deliverers of such programmes at grass root level. To increase adoption and adherence to such programmes coach knowledge and understanding of injury risk and prevention is essential. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine grass-root coaches knowledge and understanding of injury risk and prevention in youth players. 68 grass root coaches (18 females and 50 males) who were attending a one-day injury prevention workshop completed a modified validated questionnaire exploring knowledge and understanding of injury risk and prevention in youth players. Only 59% of coaches agreed that youth players are at a high risk of suffering an injury. There were high levels of agreement that injuries can have negative impacts on team performance (75%) and can cause physical problems in later life (85%), however only around half of coaches felt that injuries affect youth players current quality of life (59%). There was strong agreement that it is possible to prevent injuries in youth players (84%), but coaches were generally unaware of programs to help prevent injuries (84%), and only 9% used some form of injury prevention program. Despite this, nearly all coaches felt that their coaching could benefit from a greater understanding of growth and maturation (91%), injury prevention programmes (91%) and specific exercises (93%) for youth athletes. 17% of coaches rated their knowledge of injury prevention as good/very good at the start of the workshop and this increased to 94% at the end of the workshop. 62% of coaches identified their attitude towards injury prevention as indifferent at the start of the workshop compared with only 1% at the end. Only 14% of coaches at the start of the workshop were confident to deliver an injury prevention session but 83% stated they were confident by the end of the workshop. Finally, 98% of coaches felt that the workshop provided them with the confidence and the knowledge to deliver an injury prevention session and 98% suggested that they would implement injury prevention into their coaching. These data suggest that there is a lack of understanding of grass root coaches that children are a high-risk group for injuries, and that such injuries impact on current quality of life. Despite understanding that injuries can be prevented most grass root coaches do not have the knowledge to implement injury prevention into their coaching and very few do. There is a common consensus amongst these coaches that a greater understanding of such programmes will enhance their coaching. The injury prevention workshop appears to have increased the knowledge and changed the attitude of coaches towards injury prevention. All coaches felt that the workshop provided them with the tools to adopt, implement and deliver injury prevention in their coaching. These data highlight that there is a clear need for education regarding injury risk and prevention to be embedded within the coach education pathway, especially at grass root level.

Keywords : coach education, injury prevention, knowledge, and understanding, youth

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