



RUGBY RELATED HEAD AND NECK INJURIES PRESENTING TO AN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OVER A 2-YEAR PERIOD



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Introduction

- Head and neck trauma results in a wide spectrum of injuries, spanning minor lacerations to critical brain injury.
- Head injuries are the most common cause of rugby related ED presentation and have gained increasing attention in recent times.
- This may be in part due to the fall out of recent NFL litigation as well as a number of high profile professional rugby players sustaining head injuries and continuing on the field of play.
- The consequences of repeated head injuries to professional and amateur rugby players are relatively unknown.
- It is difficult to ascertain whether there has been an increase in incidence of such injuries or rather, greater awareness has led to a rise in numbers reported.
- Few studies have been carried out to assess age, gender and frequency of rugby related head and neck injuries in the ED.

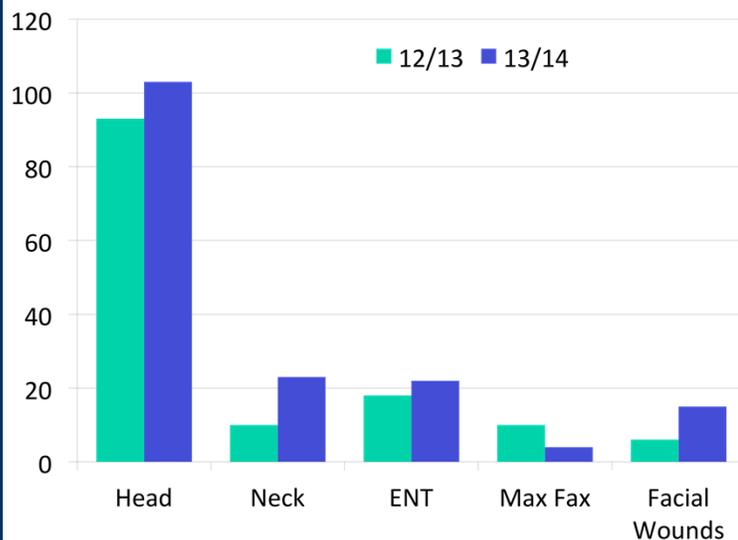
Objectives

- To determine the number of rugby-related head and neck injuries presenting to an Emergency Department (ED) in a Dublin hospital over a two-year period.
- To determine the age and gender profile of presenting patients.
- To identify sub type of head and neck injury of presenting patient.

Methods

- An ED database was retrospectively analysed for all rugby-related presentations from June 2012 to May 2014.
- Head and neck injuries were sub-categorised into; head, neck, ENT, maxillofacial and facial wounds.
- Head Injuries constitute any injury with positive symptoms for concussion (LOC, double vision, confusion etc.)

Figure 1 – ED Head & Neck Injuries 2012/13 vs 2013/14



Results

- 306 patients (89% male, 11% female) presented with a head or neck injury. 64% were classified as a head injury, 11% neck injuries, 13% ENT, 5% maxillofacial and 7% facial wounds.
- The total number of head and neck injuries rose by 23% between the periods 2012/13 and 13/14.
- Head injury presentations rose by 12% between 2012/13 and 13/14.
- The adolescent (35%) and 18-24 year old (35%) groups account for 70% of head injuries.
- The most common referral source to ED was self-presentation (74%).
- The most common outcome was discharge with no-follow up (41%).

Figure 2 – Distribution of Head & Neck Injuries

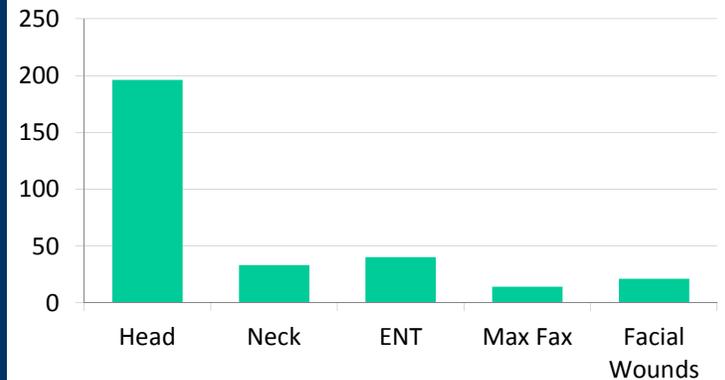
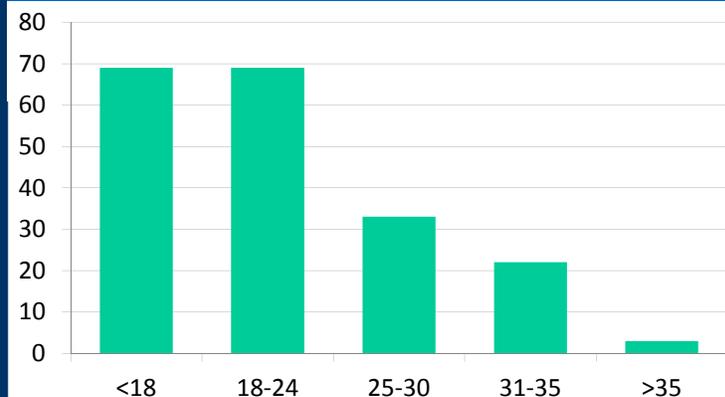


Figure 3 – Age Profile of Head Injuries



Conclusions

- The number of rugby related head and neck injuries presenting to our ED are increasing annually.
- The adolescent and 18-24 age groups account for the highest number of head injuries.
- This may reflect recent head injury awareness campaigns by Irish sporting bodies such as the IRFU and GAA.