

Injuries and Physical Limitations in Division I Female Collegiate Athletes

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The NCAA conducted research regarding incidence of injury among collegiate sports teams from 1988 to 2004. Although this study was comprehensive, more research is needed about female athletes, especially on major and chronic injuries and the limitations they pose on athletes in both the present and the future. **PURPOSE:** To compare the incidence of injury and current physical limitations between women's soccer, volleyball, and softball. **METHODS:** A survey was given to 44 Division I female soccer, volleyball, and softball athletes to inquire about injury status and physical limitations. Minor and major injuries, as well as those requiring surgery were specified and categorized as chronic or acute. Questions regarding physical activity limitations and limitations in daily living activity were also asked. Data was compared between the three sports and was analyzed using SPSS software with a Chi-Squared analysis and Pearson's correlation. **RESULTS:** A significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was found between soccer and softball athletes in both major and chronic injuries, with softball reporting significantly more injuries in both categories. There was a significant difference between softball and volleyball athletes in major injuries, chronic injuries, and physical activity limitations, with softball reporting more injuries and limitations. There was a significant difference between soccer and volleyball athletes for physical activity limitations, with soccer reporting more limitations due to sport injury. All players reported that they had, at some point in their career, played while injured or ill. **CONCLUSIONS:** These data suggest that significant differences exist between the incidence of injuries in female Division I soccer, volleyball, and softball athletes. While this information is important in understanding the difference between soccer, volleyball, and softball incidence of injury, it is also important to understand why certain athletes show more specific types of injuries than others.