



## HAMSTRING INJURY IN THE AFL

Older Australian Football players are more prone to hamstring injuries and special programs to prevent these injuries should and can be developed, according to a new study by a group of sports injury experts.

The study - in an article *Why are older Australian Football players at greater risk of hamstring injury?* -- is to be released later this month (August) in Volume 9, Issue 4 of the *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, which is published by Sports Medicine Australia.

The experts are Dr Belinda Gabbe of Monash University, Professor Kim Bennell of The University of Melbourne and Professor Caroline Finch, now at the University of Ballarat.

Their article looked at the injury records over a 12-month period of 174 players, 101 aged 20 or less and 73 aged 25 or more. Thirty nine of the players were at the community (VFA) level and 135 were elite (AFL) players.

The article points out that - at between 12% and 16% of all injuries per season - hamstring injury is the most common injury type at both the community and elite level of football and that understanding the reasons for this is crucial for preventing it.

Many other studies have connected increasing age with hamstring injury, it says, but the reasons are not understood and have not previously been investigated.

The study therefore aimed to:

- compare younger and older players to see if there were any differences which could identify hamstring injury in older players, and
- determine if any differences in intrinsic factors in increasing age could be modified to reduce hamstring injury.

The study found that the risk factors for hamstring injury were different between older and younger players.

"There are potentially modifiable changes that occur with age which could be important in reducing the risk of hamstring injury," the article says.

Two other Australian football studies in this issue are:

- *Kinematic patterns associated with accuracy of the drop punt kick in Australian Football* (A Dichiera, KE Webster, L Kilboer, ME Morris, TM Bach and JA Feller of La Trobe University) and
- *Relationship between static and dynamic balance tests among elite Australian Footballers* (H Hrysonmallis, P McLaughlin and C Goodman of Victoria University.)

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