Medical Xpress

Misguided public perception on what Tommy John surgery can do apparent in new study

February 19 2011

Despite known risks and outcomes of the common elbow procedure known as Tommy John surgery, parents, coaches and players still have incorrect assumptions regarding player performance, say researchers presenting their study at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's Specialty Day in San Diego, CA (February 19th).

"Despite the recognized risk of pitch type and amount of pitches, nearly a third of those we surveyed did not believe pitch counts were a risk factor for injury. Even more disturbing was that fact that a quarter of players and coaches thought that a pitcher's performance could be enhanced by having a Tommy John surgery," said lead author of the study, Christopher S. Ahmad, MD of Columbia University's, Center for Shoulder, Elbow and Sports Medicine.

During the spring of 2010, researchers surveyed 189 players, 15 coaches and 31 parents through either one-on-one interviews or a mail-in questionnaire. An alarming 51percent of high school athletes believed surgery should be performed in the absence of injury with the sole intention to improve performance. Thirty-one percent of coaches, 28 percent of players and 25 percent of parents did not relate pitch type with injury risk. Furthermore, 31 percent of coaches did not believe that the number of pitches thrown was a risk factor for injury to the elbow ligament. A substantial percentage also believed that control and velocity of pitches would be improved by having a Tommy John Surgery performed. The study also determined that individuals from each group underestimated the time required to return to competition at nine

months. (Typical return-to-play is a year).

In addition, identification of the surgical details of repairing the ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) and rehabilitation needs were poor among all the groups surveyed.

"Recent studies suggest an alarming rise in UCL injuries in young players, with the implementation of breaking pitches at an early age, fatigue, overuse, showcases and single sport specialization being the key aspects of injury rate increases. While this is the first study to analyze public misperceptions related to elbow UCL injury, several other organizations are working to increase the awareness of overuse injuries and help prevent injuries, including the STOP Sports Injuries campaign and USA Baseball. Our research supports their efforts and we advocate with them to correct these public misperceptions," said Ahmad.

Provided by American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine

Citation: Misguided public perception on what Tommy John surgery can do apparent in new study (2011, February 19) retrieved 19 April 2024 from
https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-02-misguided-perception-tommy-john-surgery.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.