

New study finds increase in track-related injuries among youth in the United States

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With the 2012 summer Olympic games about to take place in London, children everywhere are looking forward to watching their sports idols and role models take center stage. While the Olympics may inspire some to try a new sport, such as track, parents should be aware that this participation does not come without risk of injury.

A new study by researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital found that from 1991 through 2008 more than 159,000 children and adolescents between 10 and 18 years of age were treated in U.S. emergency departments for track-related injuries. The annual number of track-related injuries increased 36 percent during the 18-year study period, jumping from 7,702 in 1991 to 10,496 in 2008.

"Participation in track is a great way to encourage children and [adolescents](#) to remain physically active," said Lara McKenzie, PhD, principal investigator at the Center for Injury Research and Policy and senior author of the study. "However, the increase in injuries corresponding with the increased participation in this activity suggests we need to do a better job of preventing track-related injuries among our [young athletes](#)."

According to the study, published in the journal, *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*, the most common injury diagnoses were sprains and/or [strains](#) (52 percent) and [fractures](#) or dislocations (17 percent). The study looked at seven different track-related activities – sprinting, cross

country, running, hurdles, relays, stretching and/or drills, and "other" activities. The most common activities being performed at the time of injury were running (59 percent) and hurdles (23 percent).

"We found that the most commonly injured body parts varied across activity and across age group. For instance, elementary students were more likely to sustain upper extremity injuries while high school students were more likely to sustain lower leg injuries," said Dr. McKenzie, also a professor of Pediatrics at The Ohio State University College of Medicine. "With this in mind, track-related injury prevention efforts may need to be tailored by activity for different age groups in order to most effectively address the injury concerns the athletes are facing."

This is the first study to use a nationally representative sample to examine track-related injuries that were treated in U.S. emergency departments. Data for this study were obtained from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), which is operated by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The NEISS provides information on consumer product-related and sports and recreation-related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments across the country.

More information: www.nationwidechildrens.org/in ... -research-and-policy

Provided by Nationwide Children's Hospital

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