

Preventing injuries to horse racing jockeys

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A jockey riding in California can expect to have a fall every 318 rides in Quarter Horse races and every 502 rides in Thoroughbred races.

Steps to prevent injuries to racehorses could also reduce the number of jockeys injured or killed in the United States, according to a study by researchers at the University of California, Davis, published June 11 in the *Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine*.

Postdoctoral scholar Peta Hitchens, associate professor Ashley Hill and professor Susan Stover from the J.D. Wheat Veterinary Orthopedic Research Laboratory at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine analyzed data on falls and injuries to jockeys that occurred at race meetings from January 2007 to December 2011.

The study showed that in California, [jockeys](#) riding in Quarter Horse races had greater fall and injury rates than those riding in Thoroughbred races. A jockey riding in California can expect to have a fall every 318 rides in Quarter Horse races and every 502 rides in Thoroughbred races, with more than half of falls resulting in a substantive injury to the jockey.

"Catastrophic injury or sudden death of the horse was reported as the most common cause of jockey falls in both Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse races," Hitchens said.

Although jockey [injury](#) rates were similar to those reported by other countries, the high proportion of jockey falls that were a result of horse fatality is a cause for concern, the authors say.

The research findings support the need to implement strategies that are aimed at preventing horse injuries and fatalities, as this will in turn lead to a reduction in jockey falls and injuries, Hitchens said.

More information:

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