

Study examines incidence of sports-related sudden death in France

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"Although screening programs prior to participation in sports have been used for many years for young competitive athletes, it has been suggested that screening programs might also be worthwhile in the general population. Description of the incidence of sports-related sudden death by specific sports as well as by sex and age may help inform the debate," write Eloi Marijon, M.D., of the Université Paris Descartes, Sorbonne Paris Cité, Paris, and colleagues in *JAMA*.

As reported in a Research Letter, the study was performed in France between 2005 and 2010, and overall, 60 of 96 administrative districts participated voluntarily, and included a population of approximately 35 million inhabitants. Sports-related [sudden death](#) was reported by local [emergency medical services](#) and defined as death occurring during or within 1 hour of cessation of sports activity, whether the [resuscitation](#) was successful or not. Calculation of incidence of sports-related sudden death only included cases during moderate and vigorous exertion, and was assessed by sex, age range, as well as by the 3 most frequent sports among women in France (cycling, jogging, and swimming).

There were 775 sports-related sudden death cases during moderate to vigorous exertion over 5 years. Of these cases, 42 (5 percent) were women. "The average age of sudden death in women was 44 years vs. 46 years in men. The overall average incidence rate in women was estimated to be 0.51 per million female [sports participants](#) vs. 10.1 in men. The incidence rate of sports-related sudden death significantly increased with age among men, but not among women. The overall

incidence of sudden death differed by sport for men but not women," the authors write.

"Compared with men, we found a lower incidence of sports-related sudden death in women and differences by age and sport. ... Strategies for community screening prior to participation in recreational sports activities should consider both the types of sports to be undertaken and the sex of participants. The incidence of sports-related sudden death is probably underestimated in this study."

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