

Pickleball-related fractures up significantly in older adults

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As pickleball has gained in popularity, associated fractures have skyrocketed 90-fold since 2002, according to a study presented at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, held from Feb. 12 to 16 in San Francisco.

Yasmine S. Ghattas, from University of Central Florida in Orlando, and colleagues used the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (2002 to 2022) to examine the prevalence and trends of pickleball-related fractures evaluated in U.S. emergency departments.

The researchers identified 397 fractures during the study period. The average age of [athletes](#) sustaining pickleball fractures was 66.4 years, with 87 percent of athletes sustaining fractures older than 60 years of age. Women more commonly presented with fractures than men (69 versus 31 percent).

There was a 90-fold increase in fractures over time and a noticeable surge from 2020 onward, with fractures doubling. There were significantly more fractures in winter months (December to February: 36 percent) than spring (26 percent), summer (16 percent), or fall (22 percent). Upper-extremity fractures were more common than lower-extremity fractures (66 versus 19 percent).

Falls were the most common mechanism of fracture (92 percent). Most patients followed up as outpatients versus getting admitted (81 versus 19 percent), but admissions were more likely with age older than 60 years, male gender, and injuries to the trunk and lower extremities.

"The [fractures](#) most commonly observed were of the upper extremity in women aged 65+ following a fall, reflecting the bone health of this postmenopausal population," the authors write.

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