

INJURIES IN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

National Health and Medical Research Council partnership project

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Australian football is one of the most popular recreational sports played in this country. Many people think that women's football is a high-risk sport for injury, but little is known about the injuries that occur in community level football. We know that injury prevention programs can reduce injuries, but we don't know how we can help coaches to include injury prevention programs into their football training and game preparation. This project will help make the sport safer, and possibly encourage greater participation in physical activity by the Australian community.

Despite strong evidence that injury prevention programs can reduce knee injury risk by ~50%, sustained program implementation is difficult. This project aims to understand injury rates, and reduce barriers to implementing evidence-based injury prevention programs with methods designed to enhance uptake.

We have engaged **13 community football leagues (8 metropolitan, 5 country)**, recruiting players and coaches from approximately **140 teams (~3500 players)** to participate in a randomised controlled trial to test our implementation strategy. The Essendon District Football League (EDFL) has endorsed the project and we are **recruiting U16, U18, and senior women's teams** to participate for the **2021 and 2022 seasons**.

This project is a NHMRC funded partnership project with the AFL, Medibank, Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA), Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians (ACSEP), and Sports Medicine Australia (SMA). Education partners include Monash University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Melbourne, Linköping University, and University of Birmingham.

WHY SHOULD YOUR CLUB BE INVOLVED?

- **Best prepare your players, and encourage women and girls to play at your club**
- First clubs to take part in this **world-leading research helping to keep players on the field**
- All team officials and players receive **training and support by experts** in injury prevention
- Coaches and sports trainers will receive **CPD points** for their time
- Various **prizes and awards** for participating coaches, team officials, and players (e.g. visits from program player and coach ambassadors, coach equipment packs, signed jumpers)
- You will receive information about the injury characteristics of your league, club and sport
- The strategy aims to **connect clubs** with **their local community** beyond the project

IS MY TEAM ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible teams must:

- i. Compete in an U16, U18 or senior women's community football competition~
- ii. Train at least once per week in addition to match-play
- iii. Nominate a team representative/sports trainer to report weekly injury and training information
- iv. 16 players from your team consent to participate

~ All players will be invited to participate in this project, including those who are trans, gender diverse, or have physical sex characteristics that don't fit medical norms for female or male bodies (e.g. intersex).



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WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

Coaches

- Encourage players to sign-up in pre-season
- Attend a workshop (when randomised) and receive 1-1 support at your team's training. This may occur at any stage throughout 2021 and 2022

Team representative/sports trainer

- Attend an online or in-person training session on how to use the customised App (Smartabase)
- Provide injury and exposure (match/ training) data for the entire 2021 and 2022 community football seasons, completing weekly reports via the App

Players

- Sign-up in pre-season and download the App
- Provide weekly injury and exposure (match/ training) data for the entire 2021 and 2022 community football seasons, completing weekly reports via the App

PROJECT TIMELINE

2021 and 2022

✓ Tasks

Recruit coaches, team officials and players*

18 players signed up by Feb 28

Sports trainer & team representative training night (1 hour, 1 per league*

Online/in-person

Injury and training data collection

via app

Coach 3-hour workshop + 2 team visits

Random**

*Process is repeated from Jan - April 2022 for new players, coaches, team officials

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can contact the project team at prep2play@latrobe.edu.au or 9479 1483

