Sports Injury Essay, Research Paper

POLICY PAPER: SPORTS INJURY The ICCWA notes that: 1. Sports injuries in Australia are estimated at 1 million per year. Around 200,000 of these are regarded as serious and 40,000 require hospitalisation or surgical intervention (CHPR, 1990). 2. There is a lack of standardised data on sports injuries in Australia, both in general, within sporting codes and for schools (CHPR, 1992). This lack of information is a barrier to injury prevention. 3. The direct medical cost of sports injuries in Australia in 1987-88 was estimated at between $333-400 million. A further estimated $400 million was lost through work absenteeism. Given 1990 money values, total 1990 costs are estimated at $1 billion (CHPR, 1990). 4. It is estimated that between 30-50% of all injuries could potentially be prevented (CHPR, 1990). 5. The best opportunities for injury prevention exist in education and rule modification. Coach, trainer, teacher, player, administrator and umpire/referee education and the consequent improvements in player preparation could significantly reduce the incidence of many sporting injuries. Changes to rules, their enforcement and the attendant penalties for infringements could also reduce the incidence of some sporting injuries. 6. It is estimated that an overall outlay of $0.5 million in prevention expenditure over three years could conservatively result in a potential annual cost saving of up to $200 million (CHPR, 1990). 7. The Australian Sports Medicine Federation (ASMF) conducts a national sports injuries prevention programmme. This programme consists of the National Sports Trainers Scheme – NSTS (Sports Medicine Awareness Course -SMAC, Level 1 and Level 2 Sports Trainers Courses) and the Guidelines for Safety in Children’s Sport. 8. The Australian Physiotherapy Associaton (WA Branch) has initiated Sports Injury Prevention Programmes aimed at specific community groups. 9. The NSTS plays an important role in educating Sports Trainers for their contributions to sport safety in the Australian sport system. 10. Although difficult to accurately calculate, the scheme is considered to be responsible for a large reduction in medical, social and personal costs of sports injury (CHPR, 1992). 11. The full benefit of existing and future sports injury prevention programmes can be enhanced by greater availability and community access to these programmes. An increase in funding for programme development and promotion is needed to improve community access to these programmmes. The ICCWA believes that: 12. Prevention of injury is the most important form of injury management. 13. Injury prevention education of sports participants, sports trainers, coaches, teachers, parents and administrators is a key factor in injury prevention. This education is necessary to bring about improvements in player preparation, rule modification and facility development. 14. Sports Injury Prevention Programmmes should be available to all school students: primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. 15. Given appropriate funding, a large increase in the current level of people qualified at SMAC and Sports Trainer level in the Australian sport system is possible. 16. There is a significant need for regular standardised collection of data on sports injuries in Western Australia, both in general, within specific codes and within schools. 17. The National Sports Trainers Scheme has the potential to contribute to the collection of sports injury data in WA. 18. Sports injuries can be prevented by the use of Australian Standards protective equipment, eg. eye-guards for those playing squash and indoor cricket; and that such equipment should be not subject to the 20% sales tax. The ICCWA recommends that: 19. All schools and sporting associations be encouraged to make injury prevention education mandatory for all teachers, coaches and trainers involved in sport. 20. ICCWA Board send a copy of this policy to the relevant government ministers (Education, and Sport & Recreation), the WA Sport Federation, and Tertiary Institutions involved in teacher education. 21. Federal and State Government should consider greater financial support for the wider conduct of existing and future sports injury prevention programmes. 22. ICCWA investigate possible schemes and systems for the collection of sports injury data in WA. 23. The sports injury prevention programmes initiated by like-minded organisations be endorsed and supported by ICCWA. References: . Centre for Health Promotion and Research (CHPR) (1990) Sports injuries in Australia: Causes, costs and prevention. A report to the National Better Health Programme. Sydney: CHPR. . Centre for Health Promotion and Research (CHPR) (1992) Evaluation fo the ASMF National Sports Trainer’s Scheme. Sydney: CHPR. Acknowledgements: ICCWA acknowledges the assistance of Mr Kyle March, Mr D. Gurumoorthy and Mr Gavin Maisey in the preparation of this policy paper. The views presented in this paper are those only of the ICCWA. ICCWA also acknowledges the support of the Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation (Healthway).