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Delaying ACL Reconstruction in Kids May Lead to Higher Rates of Associated Knee Injuries, Say Researchers

Increased age and weight also factor

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Kids treated more than 150 days after an Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injury have higher rates of other knee injuries, including medial meniscal tears, say researchers presenting at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's (AOSSM) Specialty Day in San Francisco, CA.

"In our research, children who had delayed treatment of an ACL injury more than 150 days, tended to have an increased chance of also having a medial meniscus or chondral injury in their knee. These additional injuries may increase recovery time, inhibit return to play, and worsen long term functional outcomes of the knee," said lead researcher, Guillaume D. Dumont, MD of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. "This finding may also be relevant when counseling patients and their families regarding timing for injury treatment."

The researchers analyzed records from 370 patients who underwent ACL reconstruction between January 2005 and January 2011 at Children's Medical Center of Dallas. 200 patients were more than 15 years old and 170 patients were less than 15 years old. There were 208 male patients and 162 female patients involved in the study. Patients were injured in a variety of athletic activities: football (29.7%), basketball (20.2%), soccer (17.6%), cheerleading/gymnastics (4.3%), and other (28.1%).

"Weight also appeared to be a factor associated with the rate of meniscal tears found at the time of surgery," comments senior author, Philip Wilson, MD. "Our data demonstrates patient weight over 143 lbs (65 kg) to be associated with an increased rate of medial and lateral meniscal tears at the time of surgery. With recent significant increases in child and adolescent obesity rates, this finding may have significant public health implications."

The study also demonstrated a relationship of age with children more than 15 years old having a higher rate of medial femoral chondral injury. Neither gender nor sport played during injury was found to be associated with an increased rate of injury in the study.

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The [American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine](http://www.aossm.org) (AOSSM) is a world leader in sports medicine education, research, communication and fellowship, and includes national and international orthopaedic sports medicine leaders. The Society works closely with many other sports medicine specialists, including athletic trainers, physical therapists, family physicians, and others to improve the identification, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of sports injuries. AOSSM is also a founding partner of the [STOP Sports Injuries](http://www.stopsportsinjuries.org) campaign to prevent overuse and traumatic injuries in kids. For more information on AOSSM or the STOP Sports Injuries campaign, visit www.sportsmed.org or www.stopsportsinjuries.org