

One-third of NFL players with Achilles tendon injuries sidelined

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Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC (January 12, 2010) More than a third of National Football League (NFL) players who sustained an Achilles tendon injury were never able to return to professional play according to research in the current issue of *Foot & Ankle Specialist*. The injured players who did return to active play averaged a 50% reduction in their power ratings.

The aim of the study was to document the epidemiology of Achilles tendon ruptures in the NFL and to quantify the impact of these injuries on player performance. Previous studies have looked at the occurrence of Achilles tendon ruptures in elite athletes in general, but very little was known about how often that type of injury occurred specifically in the NFL or how it affected the athlete's future ability to play.

Researchers looked at publicly available NFL data including websites that summarized games, statistics and injuries, to identify players who sustained complete Achilles tendon rupture. Also noted were such variables as the player's position, age, and number of years in the league prior to the injury. In addition, yearly performance statistics were collected for the players for the years before and after the injuries.

The study found that Achilles tendon ruptures can be career-altering injuries. Nearly 36% of players who sustained this injury never returned to play in the NFL and the ones who were able to return were never able to return to their pre-injury levels of play.

"This article provides a novel approach to shed light on valuable epidemiologic data for [Achilles tendon](#) ruptures among [NFL players](#) and the functional outcome of the injury," write authors Selene G. Parekh, Walter H. Wray, III, Olubusola Brimmo, Brian J. Sennett and Keith L. Wapner. "Future studies with the cooperation of the NFL

and their official [injury](#) database are needed to fully evaluate the impact of Achilles injuries in this at-risk population."

More information: The article "Epidemiology and Outcomes of Achilles Tendon Ruptures in the National Football League" published in the December 2009 issue is available free for a limited time at fas.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/2/6/283

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