

How Knowledge Relates to Confidence in Orthopaedics and Emergency Medicine Regarding Rehabilitation in Foot and Ankle Trauma.

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Introduction/Purpose: The aim of this study was to survey the knowledge of registrars in emergency medicine and orthopaedics on five common injuries to the foot and ankle and compare this knowledge, and self-reported confidence in giving it, with that of consultants and physiotherapists of various levels of experience.

Methods: An online survey was used to gather the information using scenario based open and closed questions. A total of 102 healthcare professionals, who regularly deal with sports injuries, were recruited. This included consultant orthopaedic surgeons with a subspecialty interest in foot and ankle surgery, orthopaedic surgeons in other specialties, extended scope physiotherapy practitioners (ESPs) in foot and ankle and general musculoskeletal practice, emergency medicine consultants, emergency medicine registrars, orthopaedic registrars, senior physiotherapists and junior physiotherapists. The participants were drawn from the various healthcare institutions in the North East of England.

Results: Consultant foot and ankle surgeons and extended scope practitioners in foot and ankle both scored significantly on knowledge of rehabilitation programme design than either set of registrars. For two of the case scenarios there was a significant difference in scores between either orthopaedic consultants or ESPs and registrars ($p < 0.05$). For total score there was a trend for extended scope practitioners to score higher than both sets of registrars but this did not reach significance. Correlation coefficients for knowledge and self-reported confidence ranged between 0.009 and 0.33, demonstrating only weak positive linear correlation between scenario score and reported confidence in advice given.

Conclusion: The most significant area of gaps in knowledge amongst the two groups of registrars was in the specifics of rehabilitation programmes. There was markedly higher confidence with greater seniority, which correlated poorly with differences in specific knowledge. Registrars in emergency medicine and orthopaedics are likely to benefit from case based teaching in sports injury rehabilitation.

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