



FIMS Position Statement

In-Line Skating

The number of people participating in in-line skating in Canada and the United States exceeds 24 million. [12] In 1995 over 100,000 skaters sustained injuries requiring emergency room care. [12] While fractures of the distal radius are the most common ranging in frequency from 25% to 75%, [3,7,9,10,12] a 2%-12.8% incidence of head injuries [1,6,7,10] as well as the occurrence of severe lower extremity injuries [3,8] has been reported. A study of 61 children who fell while in-line skating reported that 1 in 8 sustained a fracture during the first attempt at the sport. [9]

It is becoming increasingly evident that an appreciable proportion of in-line skating injuries are in fact severe. In a comparison of data obtained from the Canadian Hospital Injury Reporting and Prevention Program Database concerning sport related injuries in children, a significantly greater number of fractures (55% versus 21%) and upper extremity injuries occurred in in-line skating than in other sports. Compared to the database overall, in-line skaters sustained more serious injuries and required more extensive care. [5] A London, Canada survey showed that major injuries occurred in almost one-half of the patients presenting to the emergency department with in-line skating injuries. Seventy one percent of

these involved the upper extremity and 79% were fractures requiring an average of 2.7 follow-up visits and 3.9 radiographs. These injuries resulted in significant functional impairment as measured by the Functional Independence Mean as well as significant amounts of time lost from work and participation in sports. [11]

The broad accessibility of in-line skating with the subsequent rapid growth in participation makes prevention of injuries a particularly difficult challenge for health care professionals. Risk factors include easily achievable high speeds, difficult stopping techniques, and the hazards presented by the public pathways or roads that in-line skaters share with pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles.

Most studies recommend the use of protective equipment and report that it is underused. [1,3,6,8-10,12,13] One study reports 4 cases of open forearm fractures associated with the use of wrist splints. [2] Protective equipment alone is not a guaranteed injury measure prevention. The importance of instruction for beginner skaters is pointed out. [4,6] Loss of control is identified as a major factor contributing to injury. [4,5]

The following recommendations are suggested based on the

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Canadian Academy of Sports Medicine (CASM[14]), The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS[15]), and other available information:

1. Wear complete protective gear.
2. Learn the basics.
3. Anticipate hazards.
4. Avoid, if possible, public roads and obey road rules if you must use public ways.
5. Skate in safe areas and under good conditions.
6. Do not skate while being towed.
7. Make sure to use highly visible clothing and use fluorescent clothing and illumination in the dark.

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