

Is rugby a safe leisure pursuit for children and adolescents?

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Introduction



- A popular team sport with an estimated 5 million participants in 117 other countries world wide and 204 119 participants in South Africa^(1,2)
- It is a culturally unifying sport that brought a nation together post apartheid at the 1995 world cup⁽³⁾
- One of the fastest growing contact sports played globally^(1,2)
- Inherent risk due to the contact
- Injuries include: ligament strains, soft tissue injuries and concussions ⁽⁴⁾.
- To ask a boy to stop playing rugby is unrealistic, **therefore** it is our jobs to then ensure they are safe!



Sport situation	Tommy played U13 rugby at school			
Injury	Tommy was tackled badly in a rugby game and broke his collar bone and suffered a severe concussion			
Occupational implication	EDUCATION	ADLs/iADLs	REST AND SLEEP	SOCIAL PARTICIPATION
Occupational imbalance	Remained home from school for 10 days post-concussion	He was unable to dress his upper body independently	He was unable to sleep due to pain from his shoulder	He was unable to attend his first school dance
	He fell behind in his academic work and required increased amount of time to catch up.	He was unable to manage zips and buttons independently.		He was unable to attend his friends party
	Missed school play auditions due to being out of schools	He was unable to use his cellphone to communicate with his friends or use social media as he had previously.		





How are children protected?

- Age bands are “age ranges of children and adolescents who are able to play in a specific group” ⁽⁵⁾
 - In South African rugby, children cannot play up more than 2 years without written consent but can play 1 year above their age range
- There are three sets of adapted rules:
 - Primary School (U6-U13)
 - Underage Rules (U14- U19)
 - Adult rules (U21 and older)
- Age bands are important consideration for safety as it is the main consideration factor determining which rules are applied to children at which age.
- *So if there are rules available to protect children, what are the risks?*





Risks associated with children and adolescents playing rugby

There is no literature to support when certain rules are introduced to the game in relation to normal development e.g. when are the structures in the brain able to sustain contact from scrumming

Not all children of the same age are the same size and weight ⁽⁷⁾

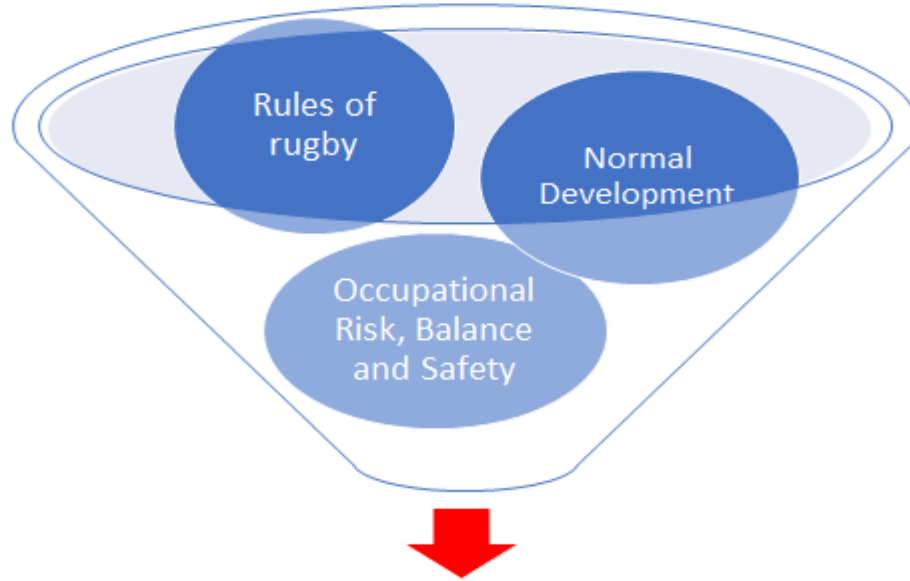
Areas of risk for children and adolescents playing rugby

The rules were developed out of statistics based on injury not on normal development ⁽⁶⁾



Why is this study of importance to OT?

I. To determine whether the rules of rugby correspond to the neuro-musculoskeletal development of children and adolescents 6-18 years of age.



Occupational therapy positioned to help to develop the rules of rugby and ensure the safety of children and adolescences

II. To identify occupational risk factors in terms of the rules of rugby for children and adolescents playing rugby.



Is rugby a safe leisure pursuit for children and adolescents? And Do rules of rugby align with the neuro-musculoskeletal development of children and adolescents 6-18 years old?



References

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Images:

1. 1995 World Cup:
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2. Two boys playing rugby:
https://www.google.co.za/search?rlz=1C1CHNY_enZA727ZA727&biw=1600&bih=804&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=qnP1Wo66M8KZgQaZi51l&q=U+13+barefoot+rugby+in+south+africa&oq=U+13+barefoot+rugby+in+south+africa&gs_l=img.3...1679766.1680509.0.1680867.5.5.0.0.0.304.304.3-1.1.0...0...1c.1.64.img..4.0.0...0.0QtFkwplJiSE#imgcr=W5PNfOFKkCzmiM
3. Boys playing barefoot rugby:
https://www.google.co.za/search?q=barefoot+rugby+in+south+africa&rlz=1C1CHNY_enZA727ZA727&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwigLjfvP3aAhUQW8AKHbZYDvQQsAR6BAGAEDE&biw=1600&bih=804#imgcr=LkBOppo0hl19jM