

## Introduction

Lateral ankle sprains are the most prevalent musculoskeletal injury sustained by individuals who participate in sports; they also account for the highest proportion of all musculoskeletal injuries presenting to US emergencies departments. Furthermore, lateral ankle sprains have the highest recurrence rate of all musculoskeletal injuries. It is estimated that up to 74% of individuals who sprain their ankle will experience recurrent sprains and/or ongoing symptoms of pain, swelling, instability and “giving way”. Return to sport (RTS) times vary for individuals who have sustained an acute lateral ankle sprain injury. At the moment , there are no clear criteria to guide RTS decisions after lateral ankle .

The aim of this study is to use a Delphi approach to develop consensus for RTS criteria for individuals who have sustained an acute lateral ankle sprain injury.

You have been identified as having expertise in RTS decision making for athletes that commonly sustain acute lateral ankle sprain injuries. Your participation in this Delphi study will involve completing surveys about RTS criteria after acute lateral ankle sprain injury. Your anonymous responses will be used to develop expert consensus.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are able to withdraw at any time by contacting a member of the research team (details below). If you withdraw, you will not be asked to contribute any further data to the study, but data you have already anonymously contributed will be retained. This is due to the anonymity of responses, which means that we are unable to identify your responses among others in the data already collected). Your privacy will be maintained at all times. Survey data will be stored securely on password-protected hard drives/servers. You may not receive direct benefit from participating in this study, but we anticipate the study findings will inform RTS practices and decision-making processes. We will send you a summary of the study findings on completion of the project.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact Dr Michelle Smith at [m.smith5@uq.edu.au](mailto:m.smith5@uq.edu.au) or +617 3365 4660. If you would like to speak to an ethics research officer not involved in the study you may contact The University of Queensland Ethics Coordinator on [humanethics@research.uq.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@research.uq.edu.au) or +617 3443 2102.

\* 1. Please select one of the options below to confirm your consent to participate in this research project. If you choose to participate in this study and select “yes” then you will automatically be directed to the survey. If you choose not to participate and select “no”, you will be unable to continue.

- Yes, I agree/consent to participant in this study
- No, I do not agree/consent to participate in this study