The FIFA Futsal World Cup Thailand 2012: Injuries to Athletes

Futsal is a variant of soccer played indoors and was approved by FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) in 1962. It has become increasingly popular worldwide and there are less severe injuries to players at soccer tournaments. There are fewer tackles in futsal than in soccer. Players who are in their early teens are most susceptible to injury, especially damage to knees, legs and ankles. Futsal players can often be injured because they have not warmed up sufficiently before starting to play, or because of sudden acceleration and deceleration moves that cause muscle tears. Plantar fasciitis is a painful swelling caused by a minor tear of the plantar fasci (a connective tissue on the sole of a foot) and is the most common injury in futsal players.

In July 2012, the Bangkok Hospital opened the Bangkok Academy of Sports Exercise Medicine (BASEM). This new center contains a wide array of advanced diagnostic technologies and exercise equipment designed to optimize athletic performance and to aid faster rehabilitation. The unit also helps athletes to improve their fitness levels. BASEM is an accredited FIFA medical center of excellence and provides the same high standard of care at multiple centres worldwide in Europe, the United States, Australia, South Africa, Japan and Qatar.

BASEM is well equipped with top of the line sports exercise medical equipment. When injuries happen, BASEM can offer medical services and advanced treatment for many sports injuries. Treatments include tennis elbow release, knee arthroscopy for anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) and meniscectomy, knee arthroscopy debridement for osteoarthritis (OA), shoulder arthroscopic decompresions and shoulder arthroscopic rotator repair. Specialists, including post-operative physiotherapists, are available around the clock.

The last futsal world tournament took place in Thailand from November 1-18, 2012. At the tournament, three futsal players sustained serious injuries and were treated by the team at BASEM.
Case Report # 1

A 35-year-old man presented with a painful left leg after taking part in the futsal 2012 competition. The magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the left leg revealed a grade 2 partial muscle tear of a deep section of the soleus muscle (Figure 1A, B) and a tear at the superficial section of the flexor hallucis longus muscle. A thin layer of fluid (2.5mm wide, Figure 1C) could be seen along the interfascial plane.

At the fascia there was no tendon involvement, and there was increased signal intensity in the anterior surface of solens muscle. The patient responded well to symptomatic and conservative management.

Case Report # 2

A 31-year-old futsal player sustained a blunt injury to the left leg. He developed a painful swelling in his left calf for two days. The MRI of the left leg revealed a grade 1 partial tear of the muscle (Figure 2A) and of the musculotendineous junction of the medial gastrocnemius muscle. A thin layer of fluid (4mm wide, Figure 2B) was seen along the superficial fascia.
Case Report # 3

A 31-year-old futsal player sustained a blunt injury above the left thigh. He developed localized pain and tenderness. The MRI of the pelvis showed a grade 1 partial tear of the left adductor longus muscle and tendon (Figure 3) at the superior pubic ramus insertion with fluid (1.5cm wide) along the superficial fascia of the muscle. He responded well to conservative management.

Discussion

The risk of injury when playing futsal is lower than playing soccer. This is due to stricter rules in futsal. For example, in futsal, slide tackles are prohibited. Players are recommended to stop the ball by chesting the ball rather than heading it. This can help prevent head and neck injuries.1,2

Figure 3: MRI imaging shows a grade 1 partial muscle tear of the left adductor longus muscle and tendon at the superior pubic ramus insertion with fluid (1.5cm wide) along the superficial fascia.

References

3. Analysis of the incidence and factors related to ankle sprains in adolescent athletes of soccer and futsal.