

Health-related quality of life among retired professional rugby players

Information letter

Why this study?

After their career in elite sport, professional athletes are likely to suffer from health complaints, especially from osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is the damage of the joint's cartilage that might impact quality of life. In professional rugby, information about the osteoarthritis-related quality of life among retired players is lacking. Consequently, the **International Rugby Players** and its national players' associations, in collaboration with the Academic Medical Center (University of Amsterdam), the Division of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (University of Cape Town), and the Department for Health (University of Bath), have initiated an international study about the health-related quality of life among retired professional rugby players.

What is the aim of the study?

The aim of the study is to gather knowledge about the health-related quality of life (with regard to osteoarthritis) among retired professional rugby players.

Which collaborative national players' associations?

Rugby Union Players' Association (**RUPA**), Rugby Players Association (**RPA**), Union des Joueurs de Rugby Professionnels (**PROVALE**), Irish Rugby Union Players Association (**IRUPA**), Giocatori d'Italia Rugby Associati (**GIRA**), New Zealand Rugby Players' Association (**NZRPA**), Pacific Island Players Association (**PIPA**), South African Rugby Legends Association (**SARLA**), South African Rugby Players Association (**SARPA**), and Welsh Rugby Players Association (**WRPA**).

What's in it for rugby players?

Your participation in the study is essential to give all stakeholders in professional rugby a good insight in the physical health complaints that might occur after a professional rugby career. Subsequently, optimal supportive measures or strategies could be developed and implemented to protect and promote the sustainable health of professional rugby players, both during and after their careers.

What are the procedures of the study?

If you are willing to participate in the study, please complete the following steps:

Step 1: **You complete the electronic questionnaire as soon as possible.** The questionnaire involves questions related to injuries, surgeries, osteoarthritis and quality of life. The questionnaire takes around 10 minutes to complete.

Step 2: **You find in your social network 2 friends or family members** (similar age) who were not professional athletes and who are willing to complete the electronic questionnaire. If willing to assist, you forward this email to them so that they can find the information letter and the link to the survey.

What about my privacy?

Your privacy is guaranteed. Once completed, the anonymous questionnaires are saved automatically on a secured electronic server that can be accessed only by the researchers. All data from the questionnaires will be processed and analyzed anonymously. Your data are not available to anyone but the researchers. You may withdraw yourself and your data from the study at any time. The data will be published in a report but all the data will be published as averages and your identity will not be revealed, either directly or by implication.

Do you have any questions about the study?

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact Dr. Vincent Gouttebauge, Principal Investigator at the Academic Medical Center of the University of Amsterdam (v.gouttebauge@amc.nl; +31621547499).