Low Back Pain in Surf Practitioners

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The surf practice involve many activities that included paddling (alternating movements of the upper limbs towards the outside or in search of the best wave peak), sprint paddle for wave (movement that the surfer performed in order to catch the wave), wave riding, and others activities that included duck diving, recovery of the board after falling, getting out and entering in the water, and the stationary period waiting for the waves [1].

The normal surfing session lasts approximately two hours [2], but it is not uncommon for competitive surfers to get three to four hours in the water and to be surfing more than once per day [3].

Several studies have evaluated the time-motion activities made by surfers during the competition or training session, in order to account for the time spent in each surf activity, and the results showed that paddling corresponded to more than 50% of the total time of surf activities [1,4-7].

Paddling is the most common movement performed by the surfer; to achieve the correct posture for paddling, a surfer has to perform an extension of the lumbar and thoracic spine so as to raise the upper chest off the deck of the board. This continuous isometric contraction adopted during paddling throughout hours of surf practice, can provoke overuse injuries in the lumbar region [4,8]. Furthermore, repeated compression and rotation movements of intervertebral discs in the lumbar spine during surf manoeuvre execution may be involved in the process of disc degeneration [9].

LBP (LBP) is characterized by the presence of symptoms in the lower back that include pain, muscle tension or stiffness [10], not consisting of any disease, and approximately 80% to 85% of the LBP episodes have no known cause [11].

LBP affects more than 80% of individuals at some point in their lives, occurring in similar proportions across all cultures and interfering with quality of life [11,12].

Several factors, such as genetic, psychosocial, physiological, anthropometric and environmental, among them ethnicity, age, sex, smoking, obesity, sedentary activities, and the practice of physical activity have been identified as risk factors for LBP [13-16].

Against this scenario, it’s necessary to promote intervention actions with the objective of promoting and preventing health; thus, it is necessary to have a better biomechanical analysis of the paddle movement of surfing and include specific training for core structures to try to prevent injuries in low back.

Preventive and specific training seem to be a factor that can contribute to the improvement of athletic performance and the reduction the number of surfers injuries.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Bibliography


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