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NEWS RELEASE

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First Study to Examine Rare Injuries and Conditions of U.S. High School Athletes

Football leads sports associated with rare injuries

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Rare injuries accounted for 3.5 percent of high school athletes' injuries during 2005 through 2007, according to the first study to examine rare injuries and conditions of U.S. high school athletes. Rare injuries include eye injuries, dental injuries, neck and cervical injuries and dehydration and heat illness, which may result in high morbidity, costly surgeries and treatments or life-altering consequences.

Football was associated with the highest rate of rare injuries, accounting for 21 rare injuries per 100,000 exposures, according to the study published in the December 2008 issue of the *Journal of Athletic Training* and conducted by researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Policy (CIRP) of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

“Neck and cervical injuries were higher in boys at 8 per 100,000 exposures while girls accounted for 1 per 100,000 exposures,” explained the study's author Ellen Yard, MPH, CIRP research associate at Nationwide Children's Hospital. “This difference could easily be attributed to girls not playing football. Of those neck and cervical injuries in football, 93 percent were caused by contact with another player during tackling or blocking. Overall though, boys had 12 per 100,000 exposures while girls had three per 100,000.”

Football also was correlated with the majority of dehydration and heat illnesses. Sixty percent of these injuries occurred during pre-season practice after the athlete had already been participating for an hour.

“This finding is consistent with previous research, which stresses the need for athletes to be hydrated. Many times, the athletes just aren't used to the environmental conditions during pre-season practice,” said study co-author Dawn Comstock, PhD, CIRP principal investigator at Nationwide Children's and a faculty member of The Ohio State University College of Medicine.

Sports studied included football, boys' and girls' soccer, volleyball, boys' and girls' basketball, wrestling, and baseball and softball. Data for the study were collected from the 2005-2007 National High School Sports Injury Surveillance Study (High School RIOTM) and was funded in part by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Center for Injury Research and Policy (CIRP) works globally to reduce injury-related pediatric death and disabilities. With innovative research as its core, CIRP works to continually improve the scientific understanding of the epidemiology, biomechanics, prevention, acute treatment and rehabilitation of injuries. CIRP serves as a pioneer by translating cutting edge injury research into education, advocacy and advances in clinical care. In recognition of CIRP's valuable research, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently named the Center for Injury Research and Policy as one of only 13 centers in the United States to be designated as an Injury Control Research Center. Learn more about The Center for Injury Research and Policy at <http://www.injurycenter.org>.