

## Female Golfer Health Project



During the World Amateur Team Championships (WATC) 2022 Espirito Santo Trophy event in France, the IGF conducted a survey to assess health problems and access to health care services in the daily training environments of participating female golfers. Specifically, the survey assessed the types and characteristics of injuries, illnesses, and mental health issues. The purpose of the study was to identify female golfer-specific concerns to inform the development of targeted prevention initiatives.

The survey was conducted by members of the IGF Medical Committee along with an external expert consultant. The project was approved by an independent Research Ethics Committee ensuring processes complied with international standards for anonymity, data protection, and ethical integrity.

## Results

### 1. Golfer health needs

In the four weeks prior to the WATC,

- almost two thirds (63%) of the golfers reported injuries mainly at the lumbar spine/lower back, wrist, or shoulder,
- more than a third (37%) complained of medical illnesses,
- one third (33%) reported mental health symptoms. General anxiety, performance anxiety and low mood/depression were the most frequent mental health problems.

*These results underscore the need for health support in the daily training environment of this elite player population.*

### 2. Injury prevention exercises

- Half (51%) of the golfers reported that injury prevention exercises were either always or often a regular part of their daily training.
- However, the frequency of performing prevention exercises did not differ between golfers with and without injury.

*It is important to identify effective injury prevention interventions and ensure they are performed correctly and consistently to improve the injury prevention benefits.*

### 3. Healthy golfers enjoyed success on the golf course.

Golfers reporting health concerns were less successful in the Championship results.

- In the four weeks prior the WATC, the proportion of golfers with an illness, or a mental health problem was highest in countries ranking in the lower 50% at the WATC.

*Implementing health supportive initiatives during the training season will translate into improved golf performance.*

### 4. Inequity to access to health support correlated with golf performance.

Access to health care support in the daily training environment correlated with golf success.

- Golfers with injury-complaints rated their access to health care in the daily training environment lower than golfers without injuries.
- Players who trained in countries with the highest availability of all types of health support staff ranked in the upper 50% of the final results at the WATC.
- Conversely, players who rated their training environment poorer ranked in the lower 50% of the final results at the WATC.
- Specifically, the players identified a lack of access to physicians, nutritionists, sport scientists and mental health support coaches.

*These findings demonstrate the global inequity of access to health care in the daily training environment in women's golf. Improved access to medical support not only improves health and wellbeing, it also may improve sport performance.*

The IGF encourages National Federations to learn from these results to

- implement injury and illness prevention programmes,
- support mental player mental health,
- facilitate access to health care support personnel in the daily training environment of female golfers.

A sincere thank you to the IGF for prioritising female player health and importantly to all the players who shared their experiences and suggestions in this project. Together, the results will serve to inform prevention and educational strategies to improve the female player health and ultimately to improve golf performance.

Original Research

## **Inequities in the Training Environment and Health of Female Golfers Participating in the 2022 International Golf Federation World Amateur Team Championships**

Margo Mountjoy, MD, PhD,\*†‡ Patrick Schamasch, MD,† Andrew Murray, MD, PhD,†§¶  
Roger Hawkes, MB, CHB,†|| Tomas Hospel, MD,†\*\* Bruce Thomas, MD,††† Ethan Samson, BSc, MedPhys,†‡  
and Astrid Junge, PhD§§