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Knee Surg Sports Traumatol Arthrosc, 2004 May; 12(3):254-8

**FANKHAUSER F, et al.****The unreamed intramedullary tibial nail in tibial shaft fractures of soccer players: a prospective study.**

Language: [eng]

**Fankhauser F, Seibert FJ, Boldin C, Schatz B, Lamm B**

University Clinic for Traumatology, Medical School of Graz,  
Auenbruggerplatz 7a, 8036 Graz, Austria.  
florian.fankhauser@klinikum-graz.at

Lower leg fractures are common and complex injuries in soccer players. Twenty-five mainly recreational soccer players who sustained a tibial shaft fracture were treated with the AO-UTN (Unreamed Tibial Nail). This prospective series included 25 males with a mean age of 28.1 years. These patients were prospectively followed for a mean period of 4.7 years. Clinical and radiographic data was collected. In addition, 20 patients completed an outcomes based questionnaire. In all but one case, the mechanism of injury was a contact with an opposing player. Shin guards provided little prevention against these fractures. The majority of these tibial shaft fractures were consistent with a short oblique or transverse fracture pattern. All fractures were stabilized with the UTN on the day of injury. Four patients had concurrent compartment syndromes and underwent a fasciotomy. Average time until bony consolidation was 11.3 weeks. No patients returned to competitive soccer activities earlier than five months after the initial injury (average 9.5). Only 11 out of 20 soccer players returned to the same level of sporting activity. Six patients never returned to playing soccer again after this injury, even without complications. The fracture of the tibial shaft in soccer players is a severe injury that can be treated safely with the UTN without major complications, but nevertheless only 50% of a mainly-recreational playing population return to the same competitive level as before the injury.

PMID: 14966669

MeSH terms: Adult, Bone Nails, Follow-Up Studies, Fracture Fixation, Intramedullary, Fracture Healing, Human, Male, Middle Aged, Prospective Studies, Recovery of Function, Soccer, Tibial Fractures, Time Factors

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