been repeated throughout all study trusts, there would have been an average of 581 fewer deaths per year (9.4 per cent of the total). There was little evidence of an association between delay and emergency readmission, say the authors.


Teenagers skip meals to watch TV and play computer games

Teenagers’ use of television or computer games partly displaces the amount of time that needs to be spent eating meals.

Researchers in Belgium investigated the self-reported frequency of meal skipping and eating faster than usual among 2,546 adolescents aged 13 and 16 in order to watch television or play computer games.

About one in ten respondents skipped at least one meal every week for either television viewing or computer game playing. Weekly meal skipping for television viewing occurred more regularly in boys and 13 year olds. Those who watch four hours or more a day (15 per cent of the sample) were seven times more likely to skip a meal for television watching.

Teenagers who play computer games four times a week or more (25.3 per cent of the sample) were at increased risk of meal skipping; those who play more than four times a week were ten times more likely to skip a meal every week.

A quarter of the adolescents ate faster at least once a week to make time to watch television or play a computer game. Regardless of gender and age, teenagers’ risk of eating faster progressively increased with their use of the media.

The authors suggest health practitioners and educators might try to encourage healthier meal habits by supporting parental rule-making regarding eating habits and media use.


Recurrent muscle strains common in slalom windsurfers

Lower back muscular strain is prevalent among both elite and recreational windsurfers, indicating a need for protective measures. Researchers in Chichester investigated the incidence of injury in 107 raceboarders, wave/slalom windsurfers competing at national and international level, and recreational windsurfers. They completed questionnaires on injury incidence over two years. Recurrent injury, ability level and preventive measures taken were also documented.

Overall, the injury incidence was 1.5 per person annually. The wave/slalom group suffered more injuries (2.0 per person per year) than the raceboard (1.0) or recreational (1.2) groups.

Overall, 45 per cent of new injuries were muscle/tendon strains (raceboarders 55 per cent, wave/slalom 42 per cent, recreational 43 per cent) and 8 per cent were ligament sprains.

In the wave/slalom group, cuts and abrasions were common. The wave/slalom and recreational groups reported five and one cases of concussion respectively. Nearly a quarter (22 per cent) of new lower body injuries were lower back muscular strains, with 34 per cent of recurrent injuries.

Of the remaining lower body soft tissue injuries, 60 per cent involved the knee or lower leg, most often including the ankle or foot. The shoulder, upper arm and elbow were the sites of 41 per cent of new upper body soft tissue injuries. The wave/slalom group reported 250 per cent more recurrent muscular strains than the raceboard group.

Recurrent ligament injuries, particularly knees, were most common in the wave/slalom group.