

Supplement 7

Title: Factors influencing consultant knee surgeons' decision making in anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury management in athletes: an international Delphi study

Short title: Decision making among expert surgeons in ACL management: A Delphi Study

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Plain Language Summary

A non-systematic review was conducted to inform the statements used Round 1 of the Delphi study. A total of 31 participants completed round 1, with 22 completing all three rounds. The experts had an average of 18 years' experience managing ACL injuries and perform a minimum of 40 ACL reconstructions per year. Consensus emerged around several key areas, such as rehabilitation potentially reducing the need for surgery while on waiting lists and the higher re-injury risk associated with rehabilitation alone. Rehabilitation-only was not recommended in elite athletes, particularly those participating in cutting, twisting or pivoting sports despite recent evidence supporting a rehabilitation-first approach given. No consensus was reached on secondary complications or graft choices, signalling the need for further research in these areas.