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**ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING REHABILITATION PROTOCOL
IN RELATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD PROTOCOL
FOR KNEE SOFT TISSUE INJURIES AMONG SCHOOL LEVEL
RUGBY PLAYERS IN THE KANDY ZONE**

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Rugby is an intense sport; consisting of both running play and contact play, in which players are required to demonstrate speed, stamina, strength and agility. It is the most popular worldwide team contact sport and records one of the highest levels of injury amongst all the team sports.

A retrospective whole population survey was conducted among 45 school level male rugby players in the Kandy zone, Sri Lanka. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that contained 21 close ended (Yes/No) questions prepared according to the international standard rehabilitation protocol developed by human kinetics organization. Implementation of the standard rehabilitation protocol was assessed by evaluating if the players follow the required steps of management in the acute, rehabilitation and training stages of injury. The study population comprised under 17 and under 19 school level rugby players (division A and B) who had sustained knee soft tissue injuries during match and/ or training period. Seven schools were included in the study and one school was selected to do the pre-test prior to the survey.

According to the responses, 24.4 % followed the rehabilitation stage, 4.4 % followed the training stage and none of the players followed the acute stage of the rehabilitation process. The study revealed that 24.44% of knee injured players were props in their teams. 40% of these players had recurrent injuries. The study identified that the availability of a sports physician and physiotherapist to be 35.55% and zero respectively. This indicated that the entire rehabilitation process was not being implemented among Kandy zone school level rugby players.

This study shows that the implementation of the rehabilitation protocol in the Kandy zone, Sri Lanka is not up to international standards. It also emphasizes the importance of the team work process of the health care systems to prevent and manage injuries in the sporting field. By knowing proper rehabilitation techniques from the beginning, the players can reduce the time loss or medical seeking after injury. So players can play the game without missing matches and refraining from the game. Therefore, an international standard rehabilitation protocol should be adopted by the Kandy zone school level rugby players in Sri Lanka.