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PREVALENCE OF ULNAR COLLETERAL LIGAMENT (UCL) INJURIES OF THE THUMB (SKIER'S THUMB) AMONG VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS ACROSS DIFFERET PLAYING POSITION.

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Background: The thumb plays a vital role in grip, stability, and hand coordination during sports activities. Injury to the Ulnar Collateral Ligament (UCL) of the thumb, commonly known as Skier's Thumb or Gamekeeper's Thumb, can lead to pain, weakness, and functional limitations. Volleyball players are particularly vulnerable to this condition due to repetitive stress and impact forces during hitter movements. The study also seeks to identify possible risk factor, including duration of play, dominant hand movement and training load. Ultimately, the goal is to minimize the incidence and long-term consequences of thumb UCL injuries.

Purpose: To determine the prevalence of UCL injuries of the thumb among volleyball players and to identify how injury occurrence varies across different playing positions.

Method and Materials: A cross-sectional study was conducted among volleyball players using structured questionnaires and clinical assessments, including range of motion and thumb function evaluation through the Kapandji Scale. Data on player position, hand dominance, and training patterns were also collected and analyzed.

Results: The findings revealed a notable prevalence of UCL injuries among volleyball players, with a higher occurrence in players occupying hitter positions due to repetitive thumb stress during ball contact. Mild to moderate functional limitations were observed in affected athletes.

Conclusion: UCL injury of the thumb is a common yet often underrecognized condition among volleyball players. Early screening, preventive taping, strengthening exercises, and proper rehabilitation can significantly reduce injury risk and enhance athletic performance. The study highlights the need for position-specific preventive strategies and awareness programs to promote joint health and prevent long-term disability among athletes.

Keywords: Skier's thumb, Gamekeeper's thumb, Kapandji scale, Playing position, Ulnar collateral Ligament injury.