

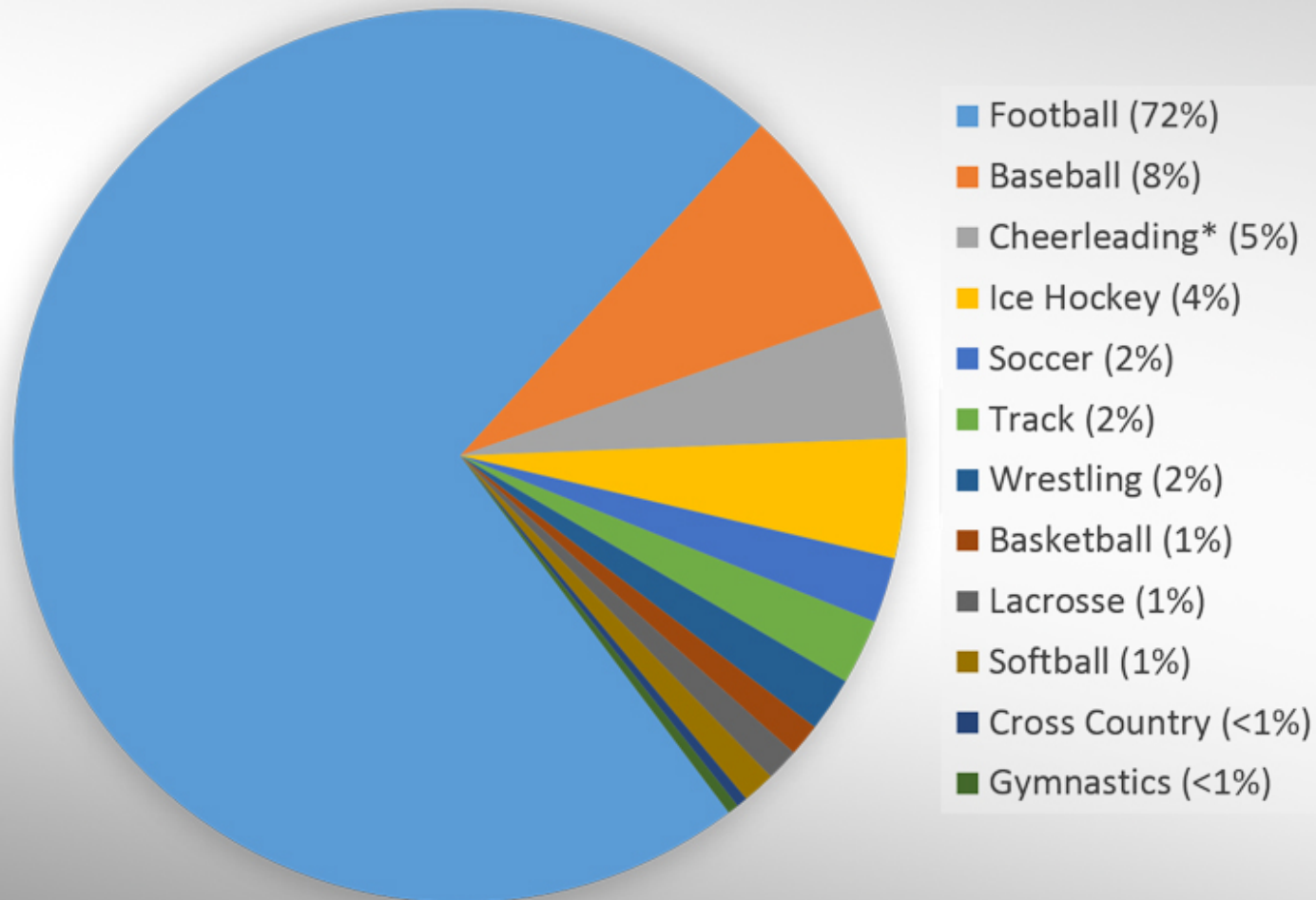
Cheerleading: Is It Safe?

Injury Data Sources

- **UNC Catastrophic Injury Study**
 - No participation or frequency info. Only total figures.
 - Reporting from various sources including news outlets.
- **NFHS High School Sports Injury Study**
 - Includes “Exposures” (participants x frequency)
 - Athletic Trainers assigned to report.
 - Data reviewed
- **Emergency Room Data**
 - Random sample of data from ERs across country.
 - Survey filled out by “what caused the injury”.
 - No frequency data
 - No restrictions on type (school, all star, kids in the yard, etc.)

High School and College Catastrophic Injuries 2008-2013

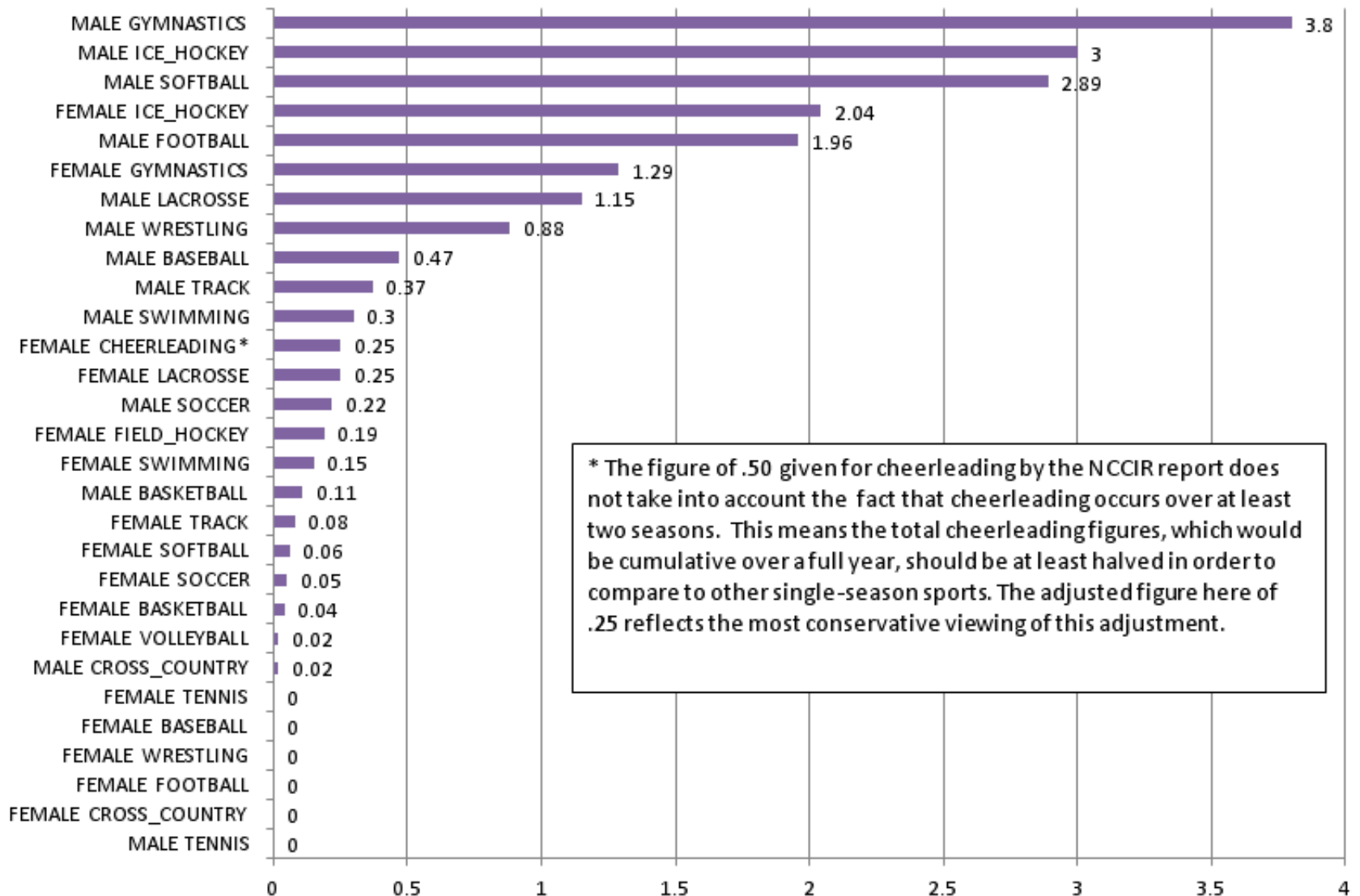
National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research (NCCSIR) <http://nccsir.unc.edu/>



* Cheerleading is a year-round sport which lasts at least 2.5 seasons compared to other school sports/activities studied. When season exposures are considered, catastrophic injuries in cheerleading are comparable to soccer, track and wrestling.

High School Catastrophic Injuries per 100,000 Participants

1982-2011 NCCIR Report (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/nccsi/>)



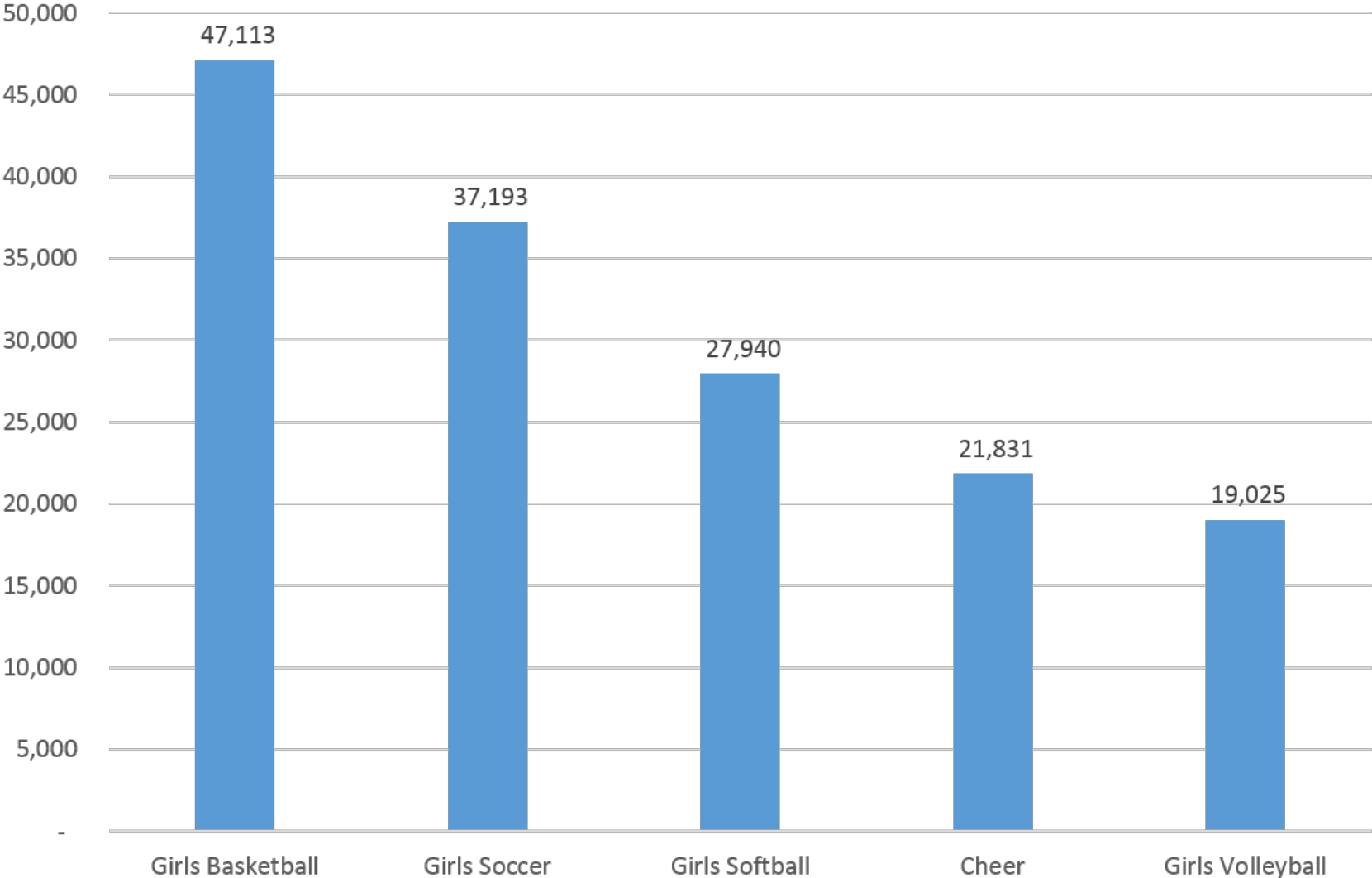
College and High School Cheerleading Catastrophic Injuries 2005-2015

¹²National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research (NCSSIR)



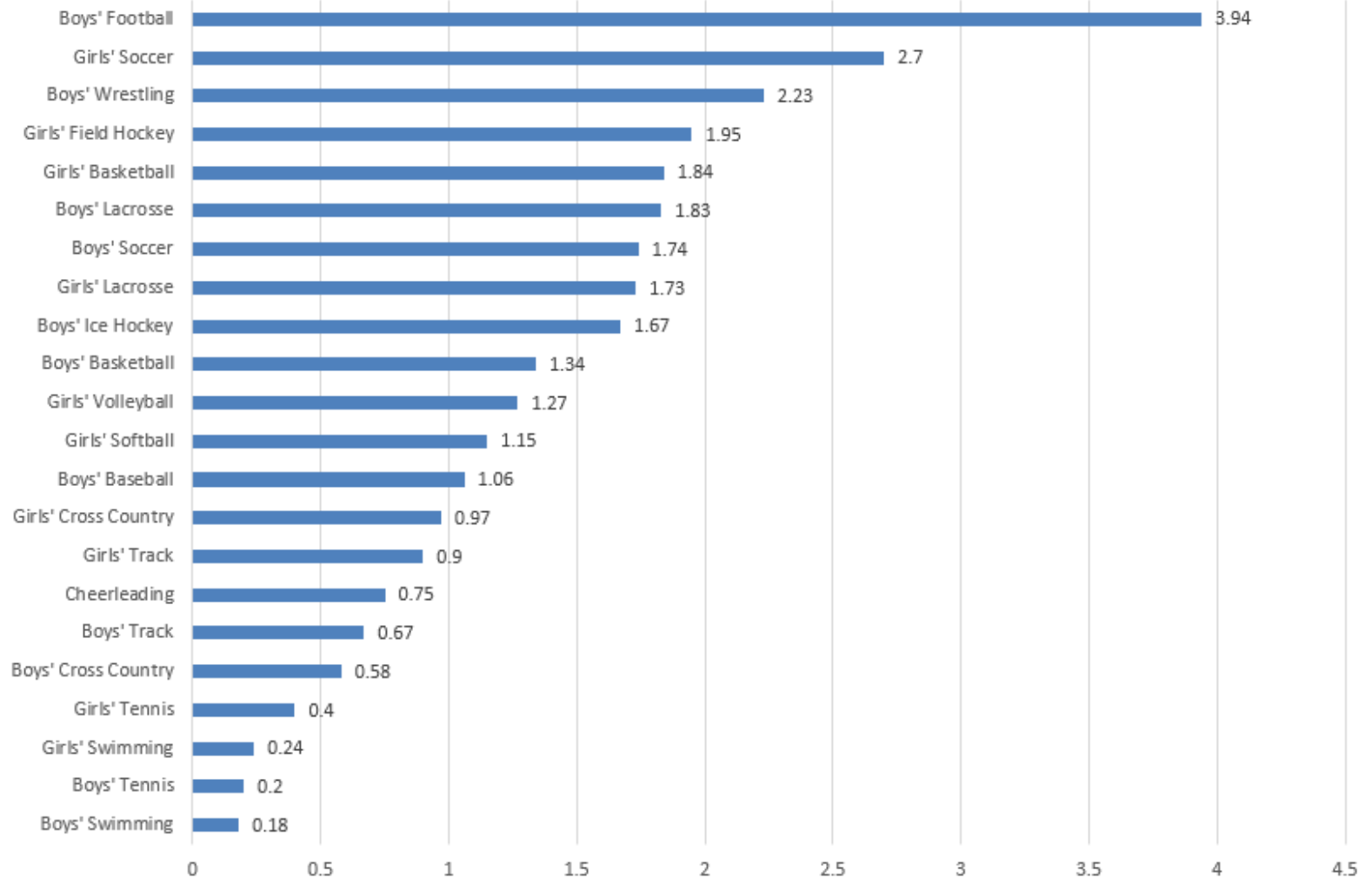
2014 Girls Sports Emergency Room Visits, Ages 14 – 18

Consumer Product Safety Commission NEISS, <http://www.cpsc.gov/>



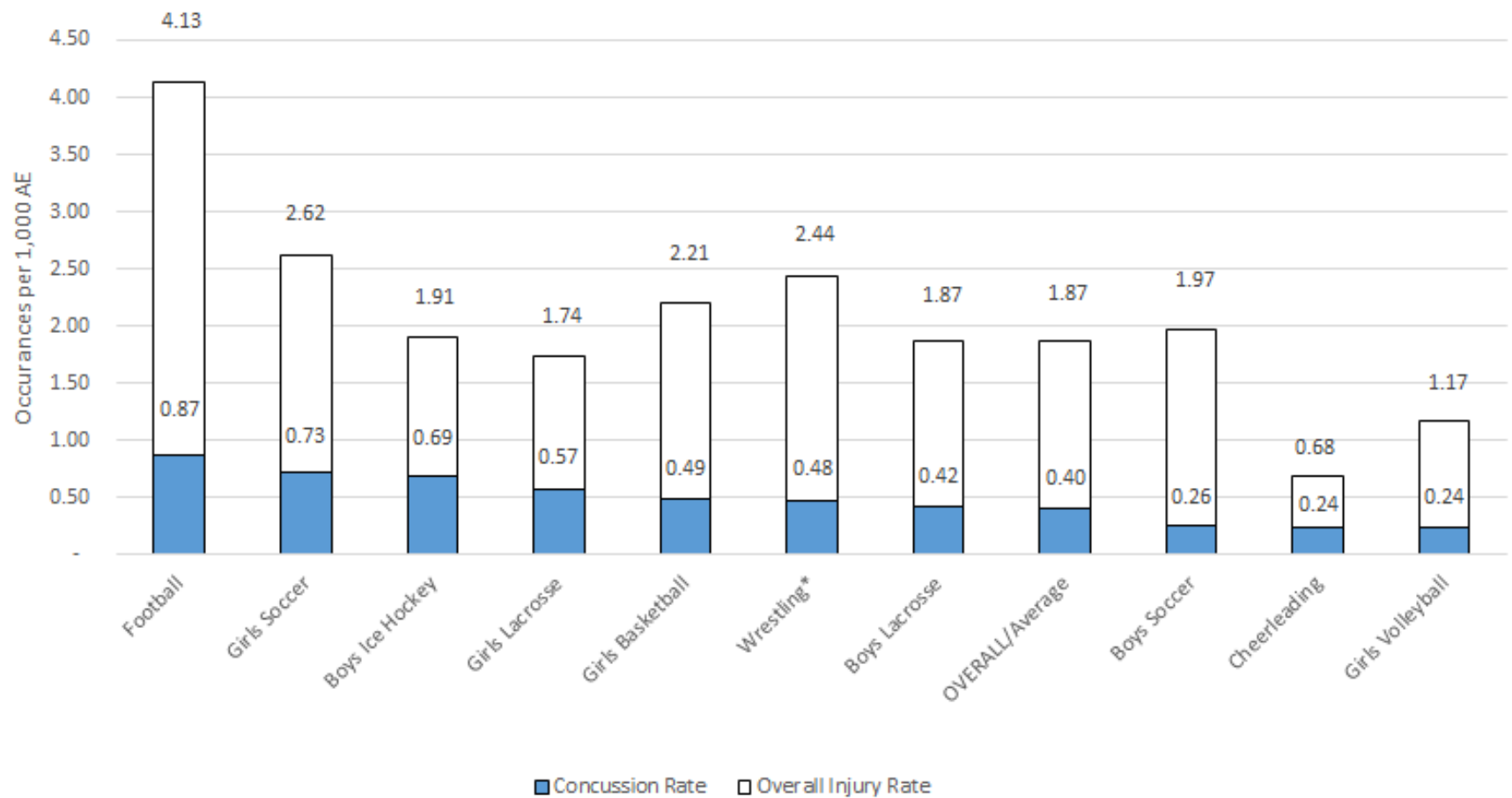
Overall Injuries Per 1,000 Exposures in High School Sports 2014-15 School Year

University of Colorado High School RIO Study, Dr. Dawn Comstock



Injury Rate and Concussion Rate by Sport

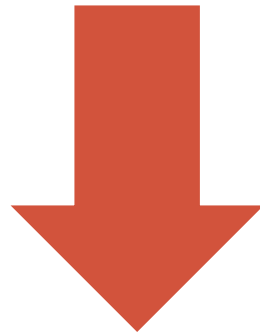
Showing top ten sports by concussion rate
2015-16 National High School Sport-related Injury Surveillance Study



Keep it up!

**Creating a Culture for a Safe
Environment**

RISK AND LIABILITY



RISK AND LIABILITY

Understand the risks

- Cheer and dance involve risk
- Height, inversion, rotation of the body.
- Even in the best of circumstances, there will always be human error (5 out of 5 doesn't guarantee #6)

Understand your responsibilities

- Duty to warn of risks
 - Waiver/Medical Release/Warning
 - Mandatory Meeting
 - Explain the form and risks
 - Size of font
 - Wording is clear
 - Consider initials by key points when educating parents are risk and expectations for your program
 - They sign where it says “I have read and understand the risks...”

Understand your responsibilities

- Follow the standard of care
 - Rules
 - Progressions
 - Procedures
 - These are in place to protect the athlete, which also helps protect you.
- Medical: Prevention, Identification, Treatment, Rehab, and Emergency Plan

Skill Progressions

- Lower to higher
- Easier to more difficult
- Repetition, repetition, repetition is the key

Qualification Form

- Track Learning progression of skills by athletes/stunt groups/squad
- Set standard for a skill
- Document date of completion, names of group, etc
- Sample list of stunts throughout progression you can use to track
- Same for pyramid sequences/set up
- Tumbling and jumps as well

Emergency Action Plan

- <http://aacca.org/eap>
 - Sample Plan
 - Sample Phone Scripts
 - Sample information card
 - Additional information/videos/pictures
- Plan it
- Practice it
- Adjust it
- Practice it
- Practice it
- Practice it

Emergency Action Plan

- **Preparation is key before setting Emergency Plan**
 - Coach or adult has CPR and completed Sports First Aid course (offered by Red Cross or NFHS)
 - If AED (automated external defibrillator) is available at facility supervisory staff trained
 - Know if access to school nurse or athletic trainer is available (develop plan with this information considered)
 - Each venue requires specific plan based on physical set up, what is available, etc
 - Access to telephone (land based line is important)
 - Know physical address of facility and landmarks/cross streets, etc
 - Have all necessary forms with you always
 - When assigning responsibilities be sure to have redundancy

Emergency Action Plan

- **Plan It**

- Coach or adult stays with injured athlete
- The following are assignments (at least 2 athletes per responsibility)
 - Call for help (911 or local emergency #)
 - Emergency # to be used along with address should be printed out
 - Script of what to say & information to be sure to include in call
 - Readily available
 - Mature athlete(s)
 - Keep area clear of students/athletes
 - Contact athletic trainer/nurse if this is an option
 - Station athletes along the route
 - May have to be out on street
 - May have to be at various points on the campus
 - Rest of athletes keep clear of area around injury to make it easier for emergency personnel to get in quickly

Emergency Action Plan

- **Plan It**

- Once Emergency Crew is on site
 - Have all paperwork/information they may need available
 - Have information about injury available as well as other medical information that may be needed (allergies, etc)
 - If transportation is required
 - Proper supervision for squad at the location
 - If no other adults available
 - Coach gives information to emergency crew
 - Stays with squad until all are properly dismissed
 - Contact parents ASAP with information (summary of what has happened, information on where they have gone and when, etc)
 - After parents are contacted be sure to contact principal, AD, or other supervisor about incident
- Once all athletes have left with parent/guardians coach can then make their way to where athlete has been transported

Emergency Action Plan

- **Practice It**

- Once assignments are done and understood the plan must be practiced (think fire drill)
- Let them know they are practicing this plan (911/emergency call group DOES NOT call but reviews the script)
- All athletes who are assigned to go somewhere on site (help direct, find the nurse, etc) should do this and report any issues (locked door, fencing, etc).
- Need to practice at different times to make sure it all works at different times of the day
- Make necessary adjustments to plans and submit to supervisor for final approval
- Practice this plan occasionally with once a month a good goal

Concussion Protocols

- <http://aacca.org/concussions>
 - This site has a lot of important information and outlines
 - Signs and symptoms
 - General recommendations
 - Guidelines for Post-Concussion Rehab
- If you suspect, they sit until diagnosed
- That may be a difficult decision (athlete first)
- Guidelines for Medical Management
 - Signs and symptoms
 - Ones reported by athlete as well as observed by coach and other athletes
- Second Impact Syndrome
 - Hard to avoid the second if you haven't recognized the first!
- Athlete and Parent Awareness is Key
 - Require they take free online course
- Gradual supervised return to play
- PPE is important
 - Preparticipation Physical Evaluation
 - Some schools offer this and if so cheer should participate in this testing

Social Media Perception

- If your program is safe, your social media should reflect that.
- Promote your/staff's credentials
- Promote staff training sessions (CPR/etc.)
- Don't post failures – do they reflect your gym?
- Don't have your team stunting on concrete at theme parks or parades
- Be wary of media inquiries
- Monitor your athletes social media if possible or go over what they should be posting/not posting in regards to the cheer program and what they do for the school

Sexual Predator Safety

- Recognize that it does exist
- Background checks on all who interact
 - You need to be aware of people you bring in
 - Not associated with the school so may not have had background checked
- Supervision
 - If people come in to work with group you cannot let them become the supervisor
 - You are still the adult who is supervising the group
 - Letting them drive athletes home, etc
- Be aware of “grooming”
 - Being observant of how other coaches treat all athletes
 - Also in regards to outside help coming in
- Clear expectations and unacceptable behaviors
 - No texting individuals.
 - Communication through “group me” or “remind” apps that broadcast to all.
- Inform parents
 - Rules about the other coaches and the rules about outside communication
- Mandatory reporting
 - Documentation
- Do not “fire and pray”!

Key to Establishing a Culture of Safety

- Switch roles with the parent. What would you expect in terms of safety and communication?
- Establish policies, boundaries, expectations
 - Promote to staff, cheerleaders, parents, potential team members
- Question your reasons for your decisions. Can they be defended?
- Keep open lines of communication
- Reward successes like great spotting
- Must be consistent with ramifications and they must be clear to the athletes, parents and your supervisor(s)