

Vascular Problems in Elite Throwing Athletes

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Abstract

There are approximately 880 and 3600 Major League Baseball (MLB) and Minor League Baseball (MiLB) players who are currently active in their respective leagues; with thousands of players in the collegiate, high school, and little league ranks. While relatively uncommon, vascular injuries such as thoracic outlet syndrome, axillary artery compression, quadrilateral space syndrome, and direct vascular trauma can afflict these players. These career and limb threatening injuries can mimic oft seen muscular sprains and strains in their early stages with nonspecific symptoms such as exertional fatigue which can delay diagnosis with disastrous sequelae including thrombus propagation, aneurysm rupture, and ischemia from distal embolization. The goal of this review is to discuss the pathophysiology, diagnosis, and treatment of these injuries to increase awareness of sport-related vascular phenomena amongst the Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery community as these players are typically seen first in the training room or a Hand specialist's office.