AB093. 187. Surfers ear is not just for surfers

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Background: External auditory canal exostosis (EACE) is a benign bony overgrowth of the external auditory canal, also called surfers ear. Despite the rise in popularity of water sports in Ireland, there is a paucity in the literature regarding awareness and prevalence of EACE amongst water athletes in Ireland.

Methods: Cross sectional online survey of water athletes. Qualitative and quantitative measures. Survey distributed through national bodies to local clubs. Ten question survey using 5-point Likert scale determined awareness to EACE. Nine-point qualitative questionnaire examined attitudes to ear plug use. Exclusion criteria—age <16.

Results: Five hundred ninety-eight questionnaires answered. Sixty-one percent male vs. thirty-nine percent female. Thirty-two point six percent were completely unaware of exostosis. Poor/no knowledge demonstrated in 43.7% of participants. Twenty-two point nine percent of participants reported ear plug use. Positive attitude to ear plugs in 62.1%. Diagnosis of EACE in 12.58% of participants. Thirty-seven point five percent in non-surfers. Seventy-seven point twenty-seven percent of participants reported experiencing some/all of the following symptoms of severe otalgia, decreased hearing, water trapping or otitis externa. Eighty-one point nine percent would like to know more.

Conclusions: There’s poor awareness among Irish water athletes about surfers ear, and even worse knowledge (43.7%). There’s a large discrepancy between attitudes to ear plugs (62.1%) and actual ear plug use (22.9%). There is a demand for more knowledge (81.9%) about EACE.

Keywords: Surfers ear; water athletes

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