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### Prevalence of neck pain among athletes: a systematic review

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**PURPOSE:** Many studies have investigated the prevalence of neck pain (NP) and its risk factors in general population. However, the prevalence of NP among athletes has not been systematically investigated yet. We aimed to systematically review the NP prevalence in athletes. As respects of various definitions of NP, response rates and reliability of studies instruments, we considered risk of bias for including studies.

**METHODS:** A comprehensive search was conducted in Sep 2015, using PubMed, Ovid SP Medline, ISI and Google Scholar. We included studies in English that reported the prevalence of NP in an athletic population in a specifically defined period of time. Two reviewers independently assessed the studies' quality, and performed data extractions.

**RESULTS:** Of 1675 titles identified, 8 articles were assessed for bias risk and 6 with low and moderate risk were included. NP was shown to be prevalent in athletes with a oneweek prevalence ranging from 8% to 45%, a one-year prevalence ranging from 38% to 73% and life-time prevalence about 48%.

**CONCLUSION:** Similar to general population, the prevalence of NP in the athletes is high. Therefore, more studies regarding pain prevalences and risk factors may be useful for planning the educational programs, appropriate rehabilitation protocols, and development of preventive guidelines. Researchers are encouraged to perform epidemiologic studies with low risk of bias in this regard.

