

HIP FACTS FROM THE LITERATURE #97

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SELF-REPORTED HIP CREPITUS IS PREVALENT & SEVERE IN FOOTBALL PLAYERS WITH HIP/GROIN PAIN



Cohort: 178 subelite soccer or Australian Rules players with hip/groin pain & 60 painfree players.

Hip Crepitus = palpable or audible cracking, grinding or crunching sensation produced by motion.

Severity rated on Item 14 of iHot-33

Prevalence of hip crepitus:

Pain group: 60%

Painfree group: 12%

Crepitus severity was worse in those with pain.

Crepitus was associated with a greater number of hip cartilage defect subregions at baseline but not with changes in early hip osteoarthritis over 2 years.

This paper has only just recently been published, previous information only available from conference proceedings, so we have some more detailed information now from this full paper. The information is from a single question from the HAGOS-Symptoms subscale: "Do you hear clicking or any other type of noise from your hip and/or groin?"

The authors found that self-reported hip crepitus is highly prevalent - present in 60% of young football players with hip/groin pain, while prevalence is very low in a painfree population.

This analysis also looked at the relationship with crepitus and structural damage within the hip at baseline and any structural change evident on MRI over a 2 year period. They found that crepitus was associated with a greater number of hip cartilage defect subregions at baseline but not with any other feature of joint pathology, including severity of cartilage damage or presence of labral pathology. There was no correlation with joint change over a 2 year period.

While there were links reported between crepitus and the number of cartilage defects, it's important to remember that association does NOT mean causation. We can't know that what these young athletes were experiencing were noises or sensations from cartilage changes. Clicking from the hip, especially in those with early joint changes, is more likely to be related to extra-articular soft tissues. This may be why there was no correlation between self reported crepitus and joint change over the 2 year period.

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So let's reassure our young athletes, that having noisy hips does not mean their hip is on a fast track to hip osteoarthritis!

Serighelli F, Crossley KM, King MG, et al. Self-reported hip crepitus is prevalent in football players with hip/groin pain, but is it associated with early hip osteoarthritis structural features? A longitudinal study. *J Orthop Sports Phys Ther.* 2026;56(2):119-127.