

OVERUSE FINGER AND JOINT INJURIES OF ADOLESCENT COMPETITION CLIMBERS - STATEMENT OF MEDCOM UIAA

International Society for Mountain Medicine Newsletter, **9** (2): 7 (April 1999)

Until today, no systematic medical data exists about injuries and overuse problems of adolescent competition climbers. There is only one publication by the Austrian Thomas Hochholzer (1997) showing 5 cases of partial epiphysiolysis of the PIP-joint in adolescent sport climbers.

ACTUAL STUDY:

In November 1997 a study involving all adolescent (13-15 years) Swiss climbing competitors has been started by the National Institut of Sport. Clinical and X-ray examination of all participants will be done. This study is still going on. Up to today, the intermediate results have not given evidence of severe clinical and/or radiological pathology. The definite results about overuse and X-ray pathology are not yet available.

ACTUAL RECOMENDATIONS OF MEDCOM UIAA:

Regarding the intermediate results of the above mentioned study for the time being, **there are no medical arguments for changing the minimal age limits for international climbing competition events at the time being for juniors: 14 years and for worldcup and masters: 16 years.**

For prevention, optimal supervision of the training by coaches and sport doctors is necessary. Overuse injuries of the finger joints, tendons and ligaments have to be recognized and treated as early as possible. Alternative training schedules have to be set up if this occurs.

The selection and construction of difficult routes with ergonomic holds prevents overuse injuries and minimizes the risks of longterm pathology.

The MedCom working group welcomes expert advice by medical doctors experienced in the field of sport-climbing pathology: Please contact the chairman of the working group directly:

Christian Schlegel, M.D., Chairman MedCom UIAA working group

Sport-/competition climbing

Swiss National Institut of Sports Science, CH-2532 Magglingen, Switzerland

April 4, 1998