

The role of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy in sports medicine.

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During the past decade, we have seen a growing number of individuals participating in sport and recreational activities. All indications show an increase in sport participation at every age level. However, the number of sport and recreational injuries as a result of this increase has also risen. Unfortunately, a primary cost related to injury recovery is the time lost from participating in and resuming normal functional activity. This has compelled health care professionals to seek more efficient and effective therapeutic interventions in treating such injuries.

Hyperbaric oxygen (HBO) therapy may serve to provide a means of therapy to facilitate a speedier resumption to pre-injury activity levels as well as improve the short and long term prognosis of the injury. Although a growing interest in sports medicine is becoming evident in the literature, the use of HBO as an intervention in this field has received a great deal of cynicism. To date, numerous professional athletic teams, including hockey (NHL), football (NFL), basketball (NBA) and soccer (MLS), utilise and rely on the use of HBO as adjuvant therapy for numerous sports-related injuries acquired from playing competitive sports. However, to date, very little has been published on the application benefits of hyperbaric therapy and sports injuries. The majority of clinical studies examining the efficacy of HBO in treating soft tissue injuries have been limited in their sample size and study design.

Further research needs to be conducted suggesting and validating the significant effects of this treatment modality and further grounding its importance in sports medicine.

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