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# Insights into Meniscal Injuries Among Young Football Athletes: A Scoping Review

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Abstract: This comprehensive literature review delves into the prevalence, risk factors, management strategies, and outcomes related to meniscal injuries, particularly focusing on young football athletes. Drawing from eight scholarly articles, it covers various aspects of meniscal injuries, including incidence rates, treatment options, rehabilitation techniques, and long-term implications. Meniscal injuries are highlighted as significant in sports, notably in high-mobility activities like football, where sudden movements and twisting motions increase the likelihood of such injuries. The review explores common treatment methods such as meniscal repair, transplantation, and partial meniscectomy, along with tailored rehabilitation approaches aimed at facilitating athletes' return to play. Research indicates that while meniscal injuries are common among athletes, particularly in contact sports like football, early detection and proper treatment are crucial to mitigate lasting effects. Understanding knee joint anatomy and biomechanics is emphasized, along with the implementation of effective rehabilitation protocols to enhance joint stability and prevent re-injury. In summary, this literature review offers valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of meniscal injuries among young football athletes. By synthesizing evidence from diverse sources, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the epidemiology, management, and rehabilitation of meniscal injuries, informing clinical practices and guiding future research in sports medicine.

**Keywords:** Football athletes; Meniscal injuries; Rehabilitation strategies; Young Football

## Introduction

The participation of adolescents in sports has dramatically increased (Aira et al., 2021; Howie et al., 2020; Strandbu et al., 2020). Physical activity plays a crucial role in the physical and emotional well-being of adolescents. Over the past 15 to 20 years, there has been an increase in youth sports participation, providing health benefits, numerous including character development such as confidence and team spirit, along with socialization among peers. However, the involvement of adolescents and children in professional sports has led to an increase in trauma incidents, particularly knee injuries, underscoring the need for awareness of injuries, especially knee injuries, among the young population. (Herdea et al., 2022). One of the most common injuries among football players is meniscus injury.

Meniscal injury is one of the most common orthopedic issues worldwide. Research indicates that stenosis in the intercondylar notch of the femur and small medial tibial spine are associated with an increased risk of meniscal injury. (Wang et al., 2022). Meniscal injuries commonly occur in sports that involve twisting and sudden changes in direction, such as football, basketball, handball, and skiing. (Sari & Kurniawati, 2022). The common mechanism of meniscal injury involves a varus or valgus force directed at the

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flexed knee while the foot is planted, and the femur is rotated inward. The valgus force applied to the flexed knee can result in a tear of the medial meniscus. (Patel et al., 2017). On research (Gee et al., 2020), Meniscal injuries often occur in the elderly population. Horizontal and complex tears are the most common and are found within the spectrum of osteoarthritis. Epidemiological data on high school and collegiate athletes indicate that football, basketball, and wrestling have incidences in both youth and adults. While tears more frequently manifest symptoms in physically active younger patients, these symptoms are more commonly seen in elderly adults, affecting approximately 31% of the largest population of meniscal injury cases. (Smoak et al., 2020).

The uncertain concomitance of cartilage degeneration with meniscal injury can lead to an increase in mesenchymal stem cells within the synovial fluid. If synovial fluid is sequentially collected immediately after a meniscal injury, the number of mesenchymal stem cells in the synovial fluid may initially increase due to knee bleeding, decrease after bleeding cessation, then continue to increase along with cartilage degeneration due to meniscal dysfunction. (Matsukura et al., 2014). The meniscus plays a crucial role in shock absorption and load transmission during walking or other activities. It is also responsible for providing stability to the knee joint, limiting flexion and extension of the knee joint at extreme angles, and providing proprioception. (Islam, 2023).

The standard of care in managing meniscal tears continues to evolve, especially for athletes and patients with high demands. (Sliepka et al., 2023). Meniscal transplantation, meniscal repair, and partial meniscectomy are commonly performed, alongside rehabilitation methods. For instance, timely reconstruction in individuals with ACL injury is necessary to reduce the risk of further medial meniscus damage in patients injured for more than 1 year. (Guenther et al., 2014). Menurut Sebastianelli et al., 2022, Tidak ada cara The standards for addressing meniscal tears lack definitive guidelines regarding the expected timeframe or optimal return to sports, and it's challenging to predict athletes' performance postsurgery. Disrupted physical growth due to injury can result in length discrepancies, angular deformities, or changes in joint mechanics, leading to significant longterm disabilities. Even a slight reduction in the number of sports injuries holds substantial significance for the health of young athletes and can have long-term economic implications on healthcare costs.

Meniscal injury is a condition where the meniscus, a piece of cartilage in the knee, experiences a tear or rupture (Perkins et al., 2021). Hence, meniscal injury is also referred to as a torn meniscus. The consequence of

this injury is impaired mobility, as the knee can become very painful, and in some cases, individuals may be unable to walk at all (Kopf et al., 2020). Meniscal injury is a common occurrence among athletes, especially football players. It causes pain in the knee and difficulty walking. Football players are particularly susceptible to meniscal injuries due to the high mobility required in the game, especially in the knee area (Redler et al., 2021). Young Football players are highly susceptible to meniscal injuries, highlighting the importance of coaches' understanding of the various risk factors that can lead to such injuries. In this study, the researchers aim to conduct an in-depth examination of meniscal injuries in young football athletes through a literature review. The purpose of this research is to educate both athletes and coaches on understanding meniscal injuries and how to address them effectively, thus providing an alternative approach to reducing the risk of meniscal injuries.

### Method

This literature review uses literature that can be accessed fulltext in pdf format and scholarly (peer reviewed journals). The criteria for the reviewed journals are English-language research journal articles with the subject Meniscus Injury. Journals that match the criteria are then reviewed. Research articles that are in accordance with the criteria are then collected and made a journal summary including the name of the researcher, article title, year published, research design, samples, research content, and research results. The summary of the research journal is included in the table, as a way to further clarify the analysis of the abstract and full text of the journal. The summary of the journal is then analyzed on the contents contained in the research objectives and research results / findings. The analysis method used uses journal content analysis. The stages of this research are presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The Stages of the Research

### **Result and Discussion**

This literature review delves into the realm of meniscal injuries among football players, drawing insights from a collection of eight articles sourced from international journals via a Google Scholar search using the keyword "Meniscus Injury." Employing Critical Appraisal analysis, the literature was scrutinized to address the research problem comprehensively. Through this method, the core of each journal and the

<b>Table 1.</b> Literature Keview Summary of Kesun	Table 1.	Literature	Review	Summary	of Result
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study results were meticulously examined to discern both commonalities and disparities among the articles. By consolidating findings from diverse sources, this review aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the prevalence, risk factors, management strategies, and outcomes associated with meniscus injuries in the context of football, potentially informing future research directions and clinical practices in sports medicine. For more details, please refer to the Table 1.

Author	Heading	Method	Result
(Pichler et al.,	Functional Outcome of All-Soft-	The study involved 40 patients	The study included 40 patients
2022)	Tissue Quadriceps Tendon	(average age 31.3) who	(average age 31.3, 73% male) who
	Autograft in ACL	underwent ACL reconstruction	underwent ACL reconstruction
	Reconstruction in Young and	with QT autografts from	with QT autografts. Over a 16.8-
	Follow Up of 1 Year	August 2018 to December 2020.	month follow-up, no reruptures
	Pollow-Op of 1 Teal.	Outcomes were assessed up to	functional outcomes significantly
		16.8 months, with no infections	improved, especially in IKDC score
		complications in 2 patients	and Tegner activity scale
(Wilson et	Incidence, Presentation, and	The study included pediatric	Out of 314 patients, 58 (18,5%) had
al., 2018)	Treatment of Pediatric and	and adolescent patients with	posterior meniscal root injuries,
, ,	Adolescent Meniscal Root	meniscal injuries from March	averaging 16 years old. Most
	Injuries	2012 to February 2015,	injuries were noncontact, often
		excluding certain conditions.	linked with sports like football and
		It analyzed demographics,	basketball. Root injuries commonly
		injury mechanisms, and	involved ACL injuries and showed
		treatments, using statistical	higher meniscal extrusion.
		injury prevalence	
		presentation, and outcomes.	
(Giuliani et	Treatment of meniscal injuries in	The paper discusses meniscal	The research highlights preserving
al., 2011)	young athletes.	injury treatment in young	meniscal tissue in young, active
	, ,	athletes, highlighting the	patients to reduce pain and
		outside-in repair technique to	maintain chondroprotective
		reduce neurovascular injury.	properties. Partial meniscectomy
		Despite clinical success,	shows better outcomes than
		younger patients often show	complete meniscectomy. Meniscal
		incomplete healing and earlier	allograft transplantation offers pain
		failure compared to older	relief, but long-term outcomes are
		patients.	unclear.
(Vaishya et al.,	Meniscal Injuries in the Olympic	Researchers conducted a	The knee, particularly the meniscus,
2020)	and Elite Athletes	literature search on meniscali	s frequently injured in elite athletes,
		injuries in professional athletes	with football having the highest rate
		using PubMed and Scopus. They	of meniscal injuries. Knee injuries are
		analyzed data from Summer,	the second most common in the
		winter, and Youth Olympics,	Jympics, with detailed data often
		identify trends, common injuries	acking in epidemiological studies.
		and incidence rates using	
		Microsoft Excel 365.	
(D'Ambrosi et	In elite athletes with meniscal	The systematic review adhered	The study included 421 elite
al., 2023)	injuries, always repair the lateral,	to PRISMA guidelines and was	athletes (415 men, 6 women) from
	think about the medial! A	registered in PROSPERO	various sports. After partial
	systematic review	(CRD42022351979). Quality	meniscectomy, 84.7% returned to

	assessment used the AMSTAR- sports, but 3.7% needed revision 2 checklist. Data collection surgery. Following meniscal repair, involved a Microsoft Access 85.1% returned to sports, but 17.0% tool, focusing on patient data, required further treatment. Eight injuries treatments and studies with a mean MINORS score					
	outcomes. Study selection of 8.5 were analyzed.					
	minimized bias, with					
	disagreements resolved by a					
	senior investigator. Quality					
	assessment used MINORS and					
	ROBINS-I tools.					
(Gastaldo et al., 2022)	High quality rehabilitation to The review offers clinicians a The paper offers a rehab framework optimize return to sport following framework for lateral meniscus for footballers post-lateral meniscus					
	lateral meniscus surgery in footballsurgery rehab in football, surgery, emphasizing short- and					
	players emphasizing balancing short-long-term health balance. It details					
	term success with long-termearly, mid, and late-stage goals,					
	late-stage rehab goals and management and multidisciplinary					
	interventions, urging use of collaboration.					
	advanced RTS tests.					
(Lee & Chu,	Clinical and Basic Science ofFootball players face a high riskFormer pro soccer players often					
2012)	Cartilage Injury and Arthritis in theof joint injuries, especially in thesuffer from osteoarthritis (OA),					
	Football (Soccer) Athlete knee, hip, and ankle, leading toaffecting the knee, ankle, and hips,					
	cartilage damage and potential with up to 49% diagnosed. They have					
	osteoarthritis (OA) development increased odds of hospital					
	Meniscal injuries, ACL tears, and admissions, mainly for hip and knee					
	meniscectomy increase OA risk.OA, associated with meniscal					
	iniury accelerates cartilagemeniscectomy					
	deterioration					

Sports injuries pose a threat to both athletes and coaches. This is because the risk of sports injuries is prevalent among individuals with high mobility, such as young football athletes. Sports injuries cannot be avoided. In this study, the researcher elaborates on how to implement efficient rehabilitation training techniques to not only aid in the quick recovery of injured joints but also maximize the functionality of intact knee joints to prevent sports injuries. Suspension training methods are considered more effective in the targeted rehabilitation of injured joints, thereby enhancing knee joint flexibility and stability. (Block et al., 2022). Suspension set training focuses on athletes' core muscle strength, thereby enhancing flexibility and reducing the risk of sports injuries. (Makki et al., 2022). Flexibility and joint muscle stability training help athletes recover from injured areas as quickly as possible, maximize joint and muscle strength, enhance flexibility, joint improve musculoskeletal system dysfunction, reduce sports injury disturbances in athletes, and enhance on-field performance. (Zhang, 2023).

In cases of athletes experiencing sports injuries, particularly meniscal injuries, there is no difference between athletes who sustain injuries before or after surgery. Clinical outcomes resulting in degenerative changes in the knee joint are influenced by variations dependent on the athlete in meniscal extrusion. (Popper et al., 2023). Uchida et al., 2023, Reports indicate that the rate of return to pre-injury status and full recovery periods at the competitive level are not entirely adequate, leading athletes to continue consulting with physiotherapists. During treatment or exercise sessions, physiotherapists are present in the training room to meet the needs of patients, utilizing specialized exercise equipment to categorize exercises according to their function. (Blanchard et al., 2020). Athletes who sustain knee injuries, especially in competitive settings, are expected to undergo full rehabilitation and ensure the readiness of the injured muscles before deciding to return to sports.

Knee discomfort resulting from injury occurs due to pain associated with traumatic meniscal damage. (Razi & Javad Mortazavi, 2020). Therefore, determining whether arthroscopic surgery or medical exercise therapy is more effective in treating patients diagnosed with chronic knee pain and degenerative meniscus is essential. (Østerås et al., 2012). Rehabilitation therapy is required to restore the range of motion and muscle strength in the injured area to pre-injury levels. (Luvsannyam et al., 2022). Because lateral meniscal injuries are less common than medial meniscal injuries, athletes who sustain lateral meniscal injuries may require more rehabilitation exercises (Testa et al., 2021). A study on ice hockey players in university sports leagues found that they could return to play more quickly with a rehabilitation training program. Rehabilitation treatment focusing on functional performance was reported to provide positive long-term outcomes and accelerate athletes' return to the sports arena (Kang et al., 2023).

Athletes who have undergone previous meniscal surgery typically have a better understanding of meniscal injuries and their management compared to those who haven't. (Marigi et al., 2021). Compared to meniscectomy, meniscal repair is considered the most commonly performed treatment. (Bhan, 2020). Athletes' primary concern when it comes to meniscal injuries is the possibility of needing more surgeries and the potential for joint inflammation after meniscal surgery (Brophy et al., 2015). Meniscal injuries are associated with early symptoms such as discomfort, swelling, decreased function, and activity levels. Professional and amateur athletes experience meniscal tears at a rate of 1.58 to 2.98 injuries per 10,000. Football is one of the sports that most commonly causes meniscal tear injuries among its athletes. (Nicholls et al., 2021). Additionally, medical issues or side effects may occur following meniscal tear surgery. (Sonnery-Cottet et al., 2020). Many orthopedic surgery sources explain that during meniscal surgery, mesenchymal stem cells are often selected and differentiated into various types of tissue, including fat, muscle, bone, and cartilage. (Willinger et al., 2022). Improved healing rates, better tissue quality, long-lasting functional improvements, and better clinical outcomes have been reported with stem cell transplantation. (Tomihara et al., 2023). Scientists propose that stem cell therapy can provide an additional option for patients with meniscal tears and other orthopedic injuries, which may shorten healing time, improve function, and reduce degenerative osteoarthritis. (Andrews & Gallicchio, 2022).

In physically active youth, especially those engaged in level 1 contact sports like football, which often involve rotational movements, it's crucial to make an accurate diagnosis and provide appropriate treatment when someone suffers a meniscal injury. Given the high level of physical activity at a young age and the necessity of both the medial and lateral meniscus for proper knee function, it's imperative to ensure timely and proper diagnosis and treatment for meniscal injuries. (Kilcoyne et al., 2012). Understanding the anatomy and function of the meniscus, the epidemiology of meniscal tears, and the mechanisms of injury are crucial for coaches to minimize the occurrence of injuries. (Martínez-Silván et al., 2021).

Significant concomitant injuries will also be discussed. Relevant patient history, comprehensive

physical examination, and appropriate imaging procedures are required to make a diagnosis. When young athletes experience meniscal tears, non-operative treatment is rarely effective, hence meniscal repair is often required. (Hietamo et al., 2023). When diagnosing and treating injuries, doctors must consider all aspects related to meniscal injury. For physically active individuals who want to maintain knee function, it's crucial to identify and treat meniscal tears correctly. Meniscal tears commonly occur in young patients participating in sports. Accurate diagnosis requires relevant patient history, physical examination, and necessary imaging studies. In young athletes, nonoperative therapy for meniscal injuries is rarely effective (Tachibana et al., 2021). For young athletes, every effort should be made to repair meniscal tears, with partial resection only considered if repair is not feasible. (Laboudie et al., 2022). When diagnosing and treating meniscal injuries, which are often complex, doctors must consider aspects related to the athlete's injury issues. (Poulsen & Johnson, 2011).

Currently, meniscal tears are increasingly common injuries across all age groups, stemming from both trauma and osteoarthritis. A comprehensive investigation into the patient's history, physical examination, and characteristics of the meniscal tear will facilitate a better understanding of pathogenesis and therapy. The vascular supply to the knee joint plays a crucial role in tissue healing and repair. Therefore, identifying the correct location of the tear will contribute to the treatment and rehabilitation plan for athletes with meniscal injuries.

# Conclusion

The provided image appears to be a part of a literature review on meniscal injuries, particularly focusing on young athletes, such as football players. The review highlights the increasing participation of adolescents in sports and the corresponding rise in sports-related injuries, especially meniscal injuries. It delves into the anatomy, mechanisms, and implications of meniscal tears, emphasizing the importance of timely and appropriate diagnosis and treatment to prevent long-term disabilities. The literature reviewed indicates that meniscal injuries are common in sports involving twisting and sudden changes in direction, such as football and basketball. The treatment options discussed include meniscal repair, meniscal transplantation, and partial meniscectomy, alongside rehabilitation methods aimed at restoring knee function and preventing further injuries.

The review also underscores the role of rehabilitation in enhancing recovery and preventing re-

injury. It suggests that advanced rehabilitation techniques, such as suspension training and specific core muscle strengthening exercises, can improve knee joint flexibility and stability. The importance of a multidisciplinary approach involving physiotherapists during the rehabilitation process is highlighted, with a focus on functional performance and readiness for return to sports. Additionally, the potential of stem cell therapy in improving healing outcomes for meniscal injuries is mentioned, offering a promising avenue for future treatment. Overall, the literature review aims to educate athletes and coaches about meniscal injuries and provide insights into effective management and prevention strategies to enhance the well-being of young athletes.

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## **Conflict of Interest**

The content of this article does not create a conflict of interest.

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