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Mathematics and Science.Kinesiology.01

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Does Public Interest in Specific Injuries Increase When They Occur During Mixed Martial Arts Bouts? A Study of Google Search Patterns

Mixed martial arts (MMA) is a combat sport that combines fighting techniques from many disciplines, such as wrestling, boxing, karate, Muay Thai, and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. In the early 1990s MMA entered the United States as the UFC. Both the internet and social media have advanced the popularity of MMA and have increased the public's exposure to fighting injuries. The objective of this research is to examine injuries from popular Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) bouts in order to determine whether the volume of Google searches for specific injuries increases after the associated fights. Our sample of injuries was gathered from "Sherdog's Top 10 Worst UFC Injuries" available from www.sherdog.com. Injury information, the injured fighter's name, date of injury, and the popularity of the fighter (measured by number of Twitter followers) were gathered from Google Trends searches. Searches for the fighter and for the injury (i.e., an alignment) had a co-occurring pattern in 9 of 10 cases. The percent change in search interest for injuries increased in 9 of 10 cases (Mdn = 446%, IQR: 168.75%-1643.75%). Search interest in fighters and injuries appears to increase shortly after injury occurrence, possibly providing a window of opportunity for the timely dissemination of evidence-based information about particular injuries by sports medicine personnel. This study highlights how investigation of public search interest may ultimately have a positive impac