

Outcomes of non-operatively treated elbow ulnar in professional baseball players

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Professional baseball players with a low-grade elbow injury that occurs on the humeral side of the elbow have a better chance of returning to throw and returning to play, and a lower risk of ulnar collateral ligament surgery than players who suffered more severe injuries on the ulnar side of the elbow. The research was presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Orthopedic Society of Sports Medicine.

Led by Dr. AaKash Chauhan from DuPage Medical Group, Downers Grove, Ill., the team of researchers conducted a study of 544 professional baseball players, average age 22.5 years with 90 percent playing in the Major League Baseball level and 84 percent identified as pitchers.

Chauhan and his team of researchers sought to evaluate the relationship of MRI tear grade and injury location with outcomes for nonoperatively treated elbow ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) injuries in professional [baseball](#) players.

There were no statistically significant differences in return to throw, return to pitch and ulnar collateral ligament repair by grade or tear location. However, objectively, ulnar-sided tears had the lowest return to throw rate at 81 percent and return to pitch rate at 42 percent, respectively. Players with ulnar and both-sided tears also had a higher rate of elbow repair [surgery](#) compared to players with humeral-side tears.

Chauhan's analysis found that older players were less likely to return to play compared with younger players, and major league players were more likely to suffer re-injury or ulnar collateral ligament surgery than minor league players.

The researchers found that lower MRI grade and humeral location were objectively associated with a higher return to throw, higher return to pitch, lower rate of [elbow](#) surgery, and higher survival rates compared to higher grade, and ulnar or both-sided tears. Players who were older than 25 had a significantly higher likelihood of not returning to play after non-operative treatment. Competing at the Major League Baseball level had a higher likelihood of re-[injury](#) or having ulnar surgery.

"Based on this study, non-operative treatment of ulnar collateral [ligament](#) injuries will likely be more successful in younger players, lower grade tears, and humeral-sided injuries," Chauhan said.

More information: [www.sportsmed.org/aossmimis/me ...
AM2019-Abstracts.pdf](http://www.sportsmed.org/aossmimis/me...AM2019-Abstracts.pdf)

Provided by American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine

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