



Aikido Injuries

This article is a summary of some recent research done to try and find out whether there is a high risk of injury in Aikido training (as is often said by insurance companies in particular).

The injury rate amongst a group of Aikido practitioners (mainly at 2008 Winter Course) was determined through a questionnaire and these answers were also used to see what factors, if any, were important in producing this rate of injury.

The reason for doing this study were that although Aikido and martial arts generally are considered as "high risk" activities there really isn't a great deal of evidence for this. Study of martial arts injury rates generally is poor and studies of Aikido injuries vir-

tually non-existent. Pappas (2007) compared the rate in martial arts (including wrestling) to that of boxing from the period 2002 – 2005. This showed that in general martial arts had 50% less injuries than boxing although mixed martial arts showed an increase of 65% when compared with boxing. Perhaps the most relevant is that by Zetaruk et al (2005) which compares Aikido with four other martial arts (Tae Kwon Do, Shotokan Karate, Kung Fu and Tai Chi) and shows a 51% injury rate for Aikido practitioners over one year.

Injury rates were compared according to the following characteristics:

- Gender

- Age
- Grade (Rank)
- Total years practiced.

Gender

Male participants suffered 26 injuries i.e. 84% of all injuries whilst the 5 female participants suffered 5 injuries i.e. 16% of the total. This results in relative injury rates of .70 and 1 respectively meaning that theoretically there is a 30% greater risk to females during Aikido practice.

Age

Average age of the participants was 42.48 (SD = 11.97) years ranging from 24 to 63 years and injury rates appeared to spread relatively evenly across all age groups (Table 1)

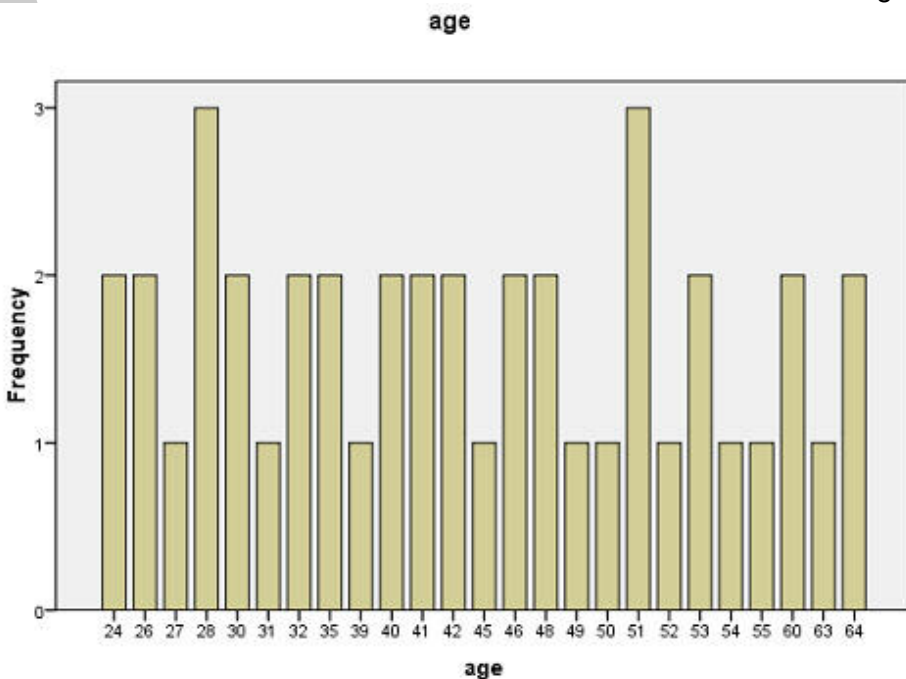


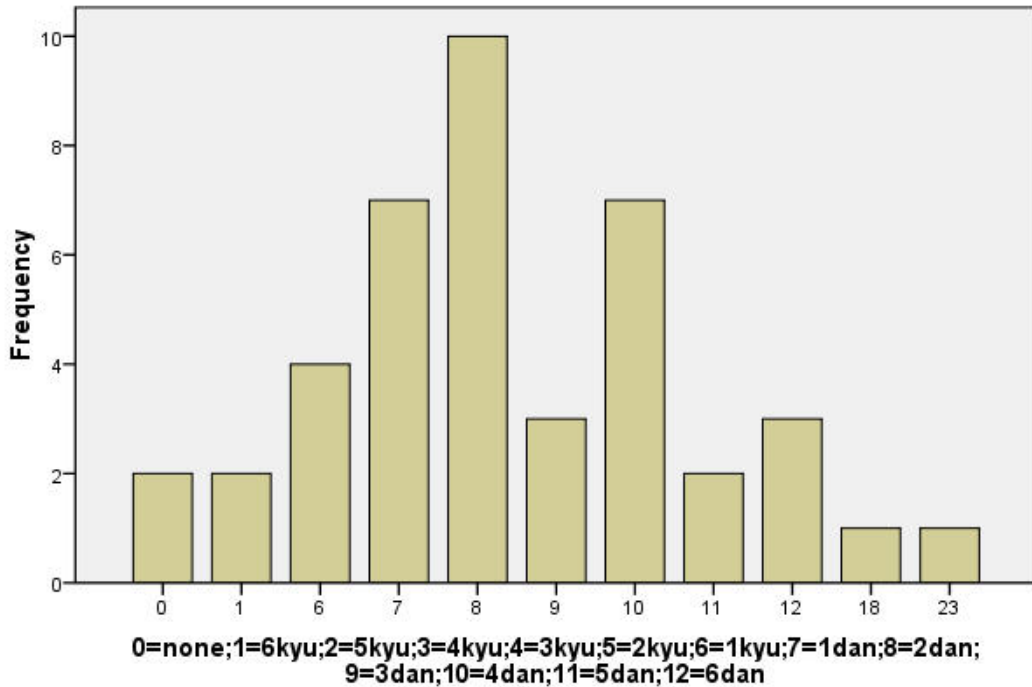
Table 1:
frequency of injury vs. age.

Pearson co-efficient of correlation was 0.332 which shows no significant relationship between age and injury.

Grade (Rank)

Once again there was no significant correlation between rank and injury with Pearson correlation = 0.141 (see table 2)

0=none;1=6kyu;2=5kyu;3=4kyu;4=3kyu;5=2kyu;6=1kyu;7=1dan;8=2dan;
9=3dan;10=4dan;11=5dan;12=6dan



Frequency of practice

Table : injuries vs. hours practiced per week

Total years practiced

Table 4: years training vs. injury

Area of injury

Injuries were reported in the following nine areas;

The main area of injury was the ankle with 9 injuries in total (one being a re-injury) or 34.6% of all injuries, this was followed by shoulder (n = 4) and hip (n = 3) injuries with 15.4% and 11.5% respectively.

1= head; 2= neck; 3= shoulder; 4= elbow; 5= wrist/hand; 6= back;7= hip;
8=knee;9=ankle/foot

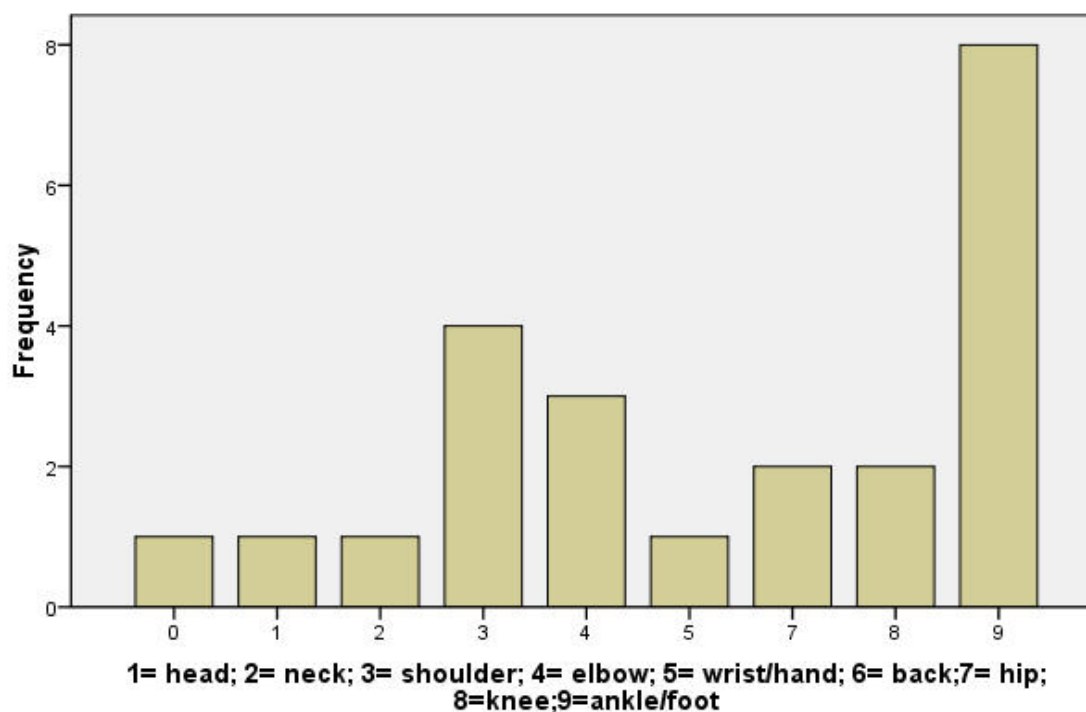


Table 4: frequency of injury according to area.

Conclusion

From this study it appears that there is no significant correlation between any of the various factors and rates of injury. One interesting finding is that the ankle is the most frequent site of injury which contradicts anecdotal evidence from Aikidoka who generally consider that the knee and upper limb are the main injury sites.

The plan is to follow this study up with further research in the area which may indicate ways to prevent or reduce the number of injuries in Aikido.

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Full article available at <http://jst.ucb.ac.uk>