

Performance related musculoskeletal disorders and injury affecting bassoonists' performance

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Abstract

Background to the research or performance/installation

This paper reports the results of an international internet-based survey of Performance Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (PRMDs) in bassoon players. This comprehensive survey assessed the prevalence, severity, duration, location and consequences of PRMDs, the types of practitioners consulted by bassoonists, treatments sought and their effectiveness in relieving the symptoms. A second study is planned in which bassoonists' musculoskeletal health and muscle tension while performing will be assessed.

Interdisciplinary issues

This study uses the combined expertise of two disciplines - music performance and physiology.

The issue/hypothesis under investigation

There has been no study to date that examines the prevalence of PRMDs in bassoon players. As bassoonists comprise a small section of an orchestra, large studies (such as the ICSOM study of 1988) collected a relatively small amount of data on bassoonists in relation to other more popular instruments such as the violin. Therefore, by comparison, very little is known about performance related pain and injury in relation to the bassoon player. As the bassoon is a heavy, awkward instrument with extremely intricate key work and demands on the musculoskeletal system both while playing, and during instrument maintenance such as making reeds, we hypothesise high rates of PRMDs that will be focused on physical stressor points particular to bassoon playing. The aim is to learn how frequently bassoonists are playing in pain, where they are experiencing PRMDs, if injury prevention is being taught by bassoon teachers, and what aspects of playing the instrument are causing or exacerbating problems.

Findings/description

Findings from 212 survey respondents will be presented, including the rate of PRMD occurrence, location of PRMDs, differences between the genders in the frequency of PRMDs, and injury prevention strategies currently being used.

Conclusions/future directions

The design of a future EMG study based on the findings of the survey will be discussed.