Dance Related Injuries: Overview

1. Participants include both male and female children and adolescents
2. Dance activities:
   o Classical ballet, jazz, tap, hip-hop, cheerleading, aerobics, gymnastics, etc
3. Mechanism of injury: overuse and traumatic
   o Majority-overuse
     • Secondary to repetitive movements
     • Turnout, running, jumping, sliding
     • Lower extremity overuse injuries most common
4. Intrinsic factors:
   o Overall fitness
   o Strength
   o Flexibility
   o Biomechanical alignment
   o Nutrition
   o Hormone status
   o Variations in anatomy
5. Extrinsic factors:
   o Poor training surfaces
   o Improper shoe wear
6. Traumatic injuries:
   o 40% of all dance injuries
   o Occur during falls, lifting, sliding into objects
   o Traumatic injuries can be attributed to:
     • Improper technique
     • Improper training
     • Muscle weakness
     • Fatigue
7. Prompt evaluation and treatment-critical in prolonging a dancer's career
   o Dance requires a fit and healthy body
   o Maintaining strength, flexibility, stability of joints and muscles is necessary to execute dance moves
   o Dancers may to hide injuries because they are afraid of stigma associated with injury
     • May be thought of as injury prone, less capable, or a risk
   o Injuries need to be addressed as soon as possible to prevent worsening of injury or permanent damage
   o When a dancer is injured, include activities in treatment plan to help maintain the current skills and level of physical condition
   o When surgery is an option, the risks/benefits should be carefully reviewed
     • Surgery or an untreated injury can lead to loss of flexibility and loss of motion, which can end a dancer's career
8. Prevention:
   o Year round conditioning
   o Flexibility, strength, and stamina training
   o Dancer education
     • Causes of injury, treatment, prevention
9. For more information
   o http://www.med.nyu.edu/hjd/harkness/professionals/

References