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Recommended citation(APA):
Schram, B., Orr, R. M., & Pope, R. (2019). *A profile of knee injuries suffered by Australian army reserve soldiers*. 257. Abstract from TRANSFORM 2019 Physiotherapy Conference, Adelaide, Australia.
https://transform.physio/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Abstract_Book_Adelaide_2019.pdf

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A PROFILE OF KNEE INJURIES SUFFERED BY AUSTRALIAN ARMY RESERVE SOLDIERS

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Aim: The purpose of this study was to profile the leading body site of injury occurring in part-time soldiers to inform injury prevention strategies.

Design: A Retrospective Cohort Study

Method: Injury data of Australian Army Reserve (ARES) soldiers spanning a two-year period were obtained from the Department of Defence Workplace Health, Safety, Compensation and Reporting database. Data included location, nature, mechanism and the activity being performed at the time of injury.

Results: Among the 1434 injuries reported by ARES personnel, the knee was the most common injury site ($n = 228$, 16%). Soft tissue injury due to trauma or unknown causes was the most common nature of knee injury ($n = 177$, 78%). Combat training was the most common activity being performed when soft tissue injuries occurred at the knee ($n = 73$, 42%), with physical training the second most common ($n = 51$, 30%), due to muscular stress ($n = 36$, 71%) and falls ($n = 8$, 16%).

Conclusion: Targeted intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to injury minimization strategies for soft tissue knee injuries during combat and physical training should be designed. ARES personnel appear to be injured at a higher rate in combat training than their full-time colleagues, possibly due to less exposure and ability to participate in combat training.

Key Practice Points:

- Efforts should be made to reduce soft tissue injuries around the knee in reserve personnel.
- Strategies to expose ARES personnel to combat training need to be developed.

Proposed impact, if any, on the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are enlisted as reservists may benefit from interventions targeted at reducing soft tissue injuries to the knee during combat training and physical training.