

Counting the cost of rugby injuries

- **Back pain treatment increased by 215% during 2014.**
- **The cost of dental implants averaged more than R9 000 per rugby player.**
- **Repetitive strain injuries on the knees have been the most common.**
- **2014 has seen an increase in rugby-related injuries.**

Sunday 23 November 2014 – Even though South Africa might have beaten Italy in yesterday's Autumn International, the cost of injuries sustained during the European tour will not only impact several of the players but also the budgets as well, according to new research by private healthcare search engine, WhatClinic.com.

WhatClinic looked at how the frequency of some medical treatments such as knee rehabilitation, dental implants, and back pain increased by more than 100 percent during the past year. Additionally, there has been a significant increase (540%) in enquiries around physical therapist consultations for rugby players in the past 12 months.

In a survey of South African massage therapists, WhatClinic has found that the most common rugby-related injuries were around repetitive strain on the knees and problems with the hamstrings such as the one suffered by Springbok prop Jannie du Plessis in the victory against England last week. Micro-fibre rips, problems with the Achilles' tendon, and injuries in the neck area are especially common in international rugby players.

In general, those surveyed recommend using the RICE (rest, ice, compress, elevate) approach for recovery, depending on the injury. However, most therapists believe that it is more important to advise rugby players what they can do to prevent injuries such as warming up and cooling down, self massage, stretches, and following a strict eating plan.

WhatClinic also surveyed South African dentists who found that the majority of rugby players are worried about losing their anterior teeth. To avoid this, they advise players to renew their mouth guards annually by going to a dentist for a more customised fit than what can be gained from using commercial products.

The following table shows the various treatments needed by an international rugby player and the potential cost per session:

Sports-related treatment	Average price (Euros)	Average price (ZAR)
Physiotherapist / Physical therapist consultation	€18	R249.00
Mouth guard	€70	R967.00
Knee rehabilitation	€24	R332.00
Sports injury rehabilitation (strapping and taping)	€13	R180.00
Sports massage	€28	R387.00
Sports chiropractic	€39	R539.00
Sports therapy	€27	R373.00
Sports and occupational rehabilitation	€24	R332.00
Dental implants	€663	R9,159.00
Dental crowns	€265	R3,661.00
Deep tissue massage	€29	R401.00
Chiropractor consultation	€34	R470.00
Massage	€18	R249.00

Emily Ross, director of WhatClinic.com, says: "The physical demand that international rugby puts on players cannot be overemphasised. One only need to glance at the injury list during tournaments like the Super 15 to get a sense of the toll that this puts on the player. As can be seen by our research, even just ongoing maintenance such as sports massages and undergoing chiropractic sessions can quickly amount to thousands of Rands per season."

– ENDS –

Notes to Editors:

1. WhatClinic.com surveyed over 7,000 medical professionals in November 2014 about their opinions on rugby and sports injuries on the whole

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About WhatClinic.com

WhatClinic.com is a clinic comparison site that lists over 100,000 clinics globally. In 2013, 15.7 million people visited the site to find, compare, and book treatments across a range of elective, self-pay medical treatments. WhatClinic.com's mission is to give the patient, as an empowered consumer, access to all the information they need to make an informed choice, including price, availability, and reviews. WhatClinic.com was founded in 2007 by tech entrepreneur Caelen King and is in operation in over 127 countries.