

FIFA Female Health & Performance Project



Pelvic Floor Dysfunction in Female Football Players: An online survey

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www.ics.org/2026/abstract/595

Introduction: Pelvic floor dysfunction (PFD) is experienced by 1 in 4 female athletes, especially those in high impact sports such as soccer. This study aimed to examine the prevalence and risk factors for PFD in female soccer players and assess its potential impact on performance.

Methods: Female soccer players (>18 years, any level of play) were recruited using an online survey. Athletes were asked about experiences with PFD using the International Consultation on Incontinence Questionnaire Short Form (ICIQ-UI SF) and the Pelvic Floor Distress Inventory 20 questionnaire (PFDI-20), and their perceived impact on performance using the Athlete Subjective Performance Scale (ASPS).

Results: 411 participants (31.2 ± 9.4 ; 87.3% white, primarily from Canada and the United Kingdom) participated in the survey.

Over half of respondents (53.9%) were recreational players and played an average 20.6 ± 8.8 years.

ICIQ-UI SF scores show 22% of players had slight PFD, 36% experienced moderate PFD, while 2% experienced severe PFD.

Players with moderate to severe PFD symptoms had a significantly lower ASPS score of 38.63 ± 11.33 ($p=0.014$).

30.4% of participants reported that PFD symptoms adversely impacted their sport performance

30.2% had seen a pelvic health physiotherapist.

Conclusion: Approximately 60% of participants experienced some degree of urinary incontinence, with over a third scoring in the moderate ICIQ-UI SF category. Perceived performance scores were lower among athletes with moderate to severe PFD symptoms compared to those with less severe symptoms

		Overall		Professional/Semi-Professional		Recreational/Other		p-value
Category	Subscales	Mean $\pm$ SD		Mean $\pm$ SD		Mean $\pm$ SD		
PFDI-20		99.63 $\pm$ 33.82		97.20 $\pm$ 37.00		100.59 $\pm$ 32.43		0.386
	UDI-6	38.13 $\pm$ 16.39		36.44 $\pm$ 17.02		38.81 $\pm$ 16.12		0.198
	CRAD-8	32.77 $\pm$ 13.11		32.87 $\pm$ 14.6		32.71 $\pm$ 12.46		0.919
	POPDI-6	28.79 $\pm$ 12.60		27.9 $\pm$ 13.67		29.15 $\pm$ 12.16		0.386
ICIQ-UI SF		4.59 $\pm$ 4.54		3.46 $\pm$ 4.4		5.06 $\pm$ 4.5		0.0014
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
	Slight (1-5)	88	21.6	19	16.7	68	23.8	
	Moderate (6-12)	147	36.0	32	28.3	115	40.2	
	Severe (13-18)	8	2.0	2	1.8	6	2.1	