

MONITORING THE HEALTH OF PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS IN THEIR PRE- AND POST-RETIREMENT YEARS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

This project is conducted by FIFPRO (Football Players Worldwide), your players' union and the Amsterdam University Medical Centers (Amsterdam UMC). For this project, we will need in total 240 professional footballers and therefore, the following seven players' unions are involved: Professional Footballers' Association ([England](#)), Jalkapallon Pelaajayhdistys Ry ([Finland](#)), Union Nationale des Footballeurs Professionnels ([France](#)), Norske Idrettsutøveres Sentralorganisasjon ([Norway](#)), Vereniging Van Contractspelers ([Netherlands](#)), Spelarföreningen Fotboll I Sverige ([Sweden](#)), Swiss Association of Football Players ([Switzerland](#)). In your country, we will strive to recruit between 30 and 50 professional footballers. This project has been approved by the Medical Ethics Review Committee of the Amsterdam UMC.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

The main objective of the project is to monitor the health (mental, joints, brain, heart) of professional footballers over their pre- and post-retirement years (in total 10 years).

3. BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Transitioning out of professional football is known as a significant and challenging time in most players' life. During this pre- and post-retirement years, professional footballers might face several challenges such as preparing their second occupational career and adjusting to a new identity, life and lifestyle. Your players' union has also shown that players are likely to struggle with their health during and/or after their career.

Consequently, FIFPRO and your players' union, in collaboration with the Amsterdam UMC, have initiated this unique project in order to monitor your health over the next 10 years. With the results of this project, we will be able to get a better understanding about when and how health problems might occur and when support measures should be offered.

4. PROCEDURES AND MEASUREMENTS

If you are willing to participate in the project, your health (mental, joints, brain, heart) will be monitored over the next 10 years (that means during and after your career) thanks to several measurements. Many of these measurements are already conducted at your football club so we will simply use those. In addition, some other measurements will be made, namely:

- **Online questionnaire:** you complete every year an electronic questionnaire about feelings, injuries, joint pain and limitations; this questionnaire is divided in three main modules (15-25 minutes each) that you can complete from your laptop or tablet at your home whenever you have time.



- **Online testing:** you do every two years seven online tests about memory and attention; you can do the tests (25 minutes) from your laptop or tablet at your home whenever you have time.
- **Medical visit:** you visit a medical centre (of your choice) every three years (only three times over 10 years) where (i) a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of your brain is conducted (15 minutes), (ii) radiological images (X-rays) of your hips, knees and ankles are taken (20 minutes), (iii) an electrocardiogram (ECG) is conducted to record the electrical activity of your heart (10 minutes), and/or a blood sample is taken (2 minutes).

MRI >>> A Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of your brain is a safe and painless test during which you will have to stay still in order to obtain the clearest images. You will lie down on a table that slides into the MRI machine and then, the technician will take several pictures of your brain. The MRI of your brain will take around 15 minutes to perform.

X-rays >>> Radiological images (X-rays) of your hips, knees and ankles will be taken with an X-ray machine that allows to produce images of the bones and cartilage in your joints. The X-rays of your joints are safe and painless, and will take around 20 minutes to perform.

ECG >>> An electrocardiogram (ECG) is painless and harmless test that will record the electrical activity of your heart. Several electrodes will be placed on different parts of your body in order to detect electrical impulses coming from different directions within your heart. The ECG of your heart will take around 10 minutes to perform.

All costs related to all measurements will be paid and/or reimbursed.

5. EXPECTATIONS FROM YOU

If you are willing to participate in the project, you just have to sign an informed consent and complete all measurements. You can withdraw from the project at any time by contacting the project leader Dr. Vincent Gouttebarge.

6. POTENTIAL RISKS OF THE PROJECT

Most of the measurements in the project are already conducted during your football career. The measurements during the medical visit (e.g., MRI, X-rays, ECG) are harmless. Therefore, there is no risk related to your participation in the project.

7. BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

If you are willing to participate in the project, we will monitor your health (mental, joints, brain, heart) over the next 10 years, also after your retirement from professional football. During this period, we will provide you regularly with a short report about your health. When needed, we will explore and discuss which treatment/support might be available.

8. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROJECT

Participation is voluntary. You can withdraw from the project at any time by contacting the project leader Dr. Vincent Gouttebarge. The data collected up to that point will be used for the investigation.

9. END OF THE PROJECT

Your participation in the project will stop when all measurements have been completed. The project will end once all participants have completed the measurements. After processing all data, you will be informed about the most important results of the project. With regard to the duration of the project, you will be informed regularly about the project in the next 10 years.



10. USE AND STORAGE OF THE DATA

Your privacy and the confidentiality of your data is fully guaranteed. All collected data are depersonalised and anonymised by using a unique code. Your data and your unique code are saved for 15 years on a secured electronic server that can be accessed only by few specialists at the Amsterdam UMC, among which by the project leader Dr. Vincent Goutteborge. That means that your data is not available to anyone else, also not to your General Practitioner or Club Doctor. In case of unusual results during the project, and if you provide us with your consent, we will contact you and discuss the implications of these results. You can then discuss with your doctor or specialist what needs to be done.

11. NOTICE TO YOUR GENERAL PRACTITIONER OR CLUB DOCTOR

Your General Practitioner, Club Doctor and/or specialist are not informed about your participation to the project. If you wish, you can inform your General Practitioner, Club Doctor and/or specialist yourself about your participation to the project.

12. COSTS OF THE MEASUREMENTS

All costs related to all measurements are paid and/or reimbursed.

13. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact Dr. Vincent Goutteborge (v.goutteborge@fifpro.org; +31621547499) who is leading the project. Vincent is a former professional footballer (France & The Netherlands) who is nowadays working as Chief Medical Officer at FIFPRO and A/Professor at Amsterdam UMC. Vincent is available for all your questions!

14. INDEPENDENT MEDICAL DOCTOR

For this project, the Amsterdam UMC has assigned an independent medical doctor in case you have any concerns that cannot discuss with Dr. Vincent Goutteborge. This independent medical doctor is Dr. Guus Reurink (g.reurink@amsterdamumc.nl; +31205662172).



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PLAYERS
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