



Chris Jackson

Chris Jackson is a former professional footballer who played more than 500 matches and made 72 appearances for the national team of New Zealand. Chris publicly spoke about his mental health problems in exclusive interviews with FIFPro.

"I had and still have a lot of anxiety regarding performance. The pressure bottled up for years particularly when I captained different teams and had to be the face of the team when going through tough times."

"In everyday life, my illness made me quite withdrawn from a large part of society."

"The effect on my professional life was that I played with fear and negativity. I was just trying to get through each game until the end of each season brought relief."

"I didn't tackle the problem at all, because I never admitted to myself I had a problem, just that I needed to keep everything I was feeling inside and not let it out."

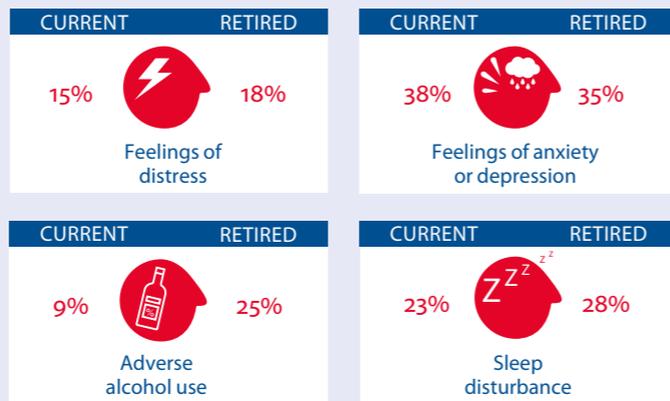
FIFPro study

About mental health problems in professional football

Participants



Mental health problems



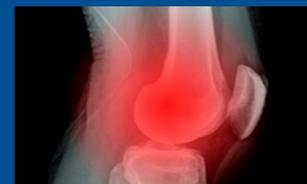
FIFPro supports the health and safety of players, both during and after their career



Musculoskeletal injuries



Concussions



Osteoarthritis



Sudden cardiac arrest



Mental health

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For any questions on health and safety, please contact: your players' union or FIFPro's Chief Medical Officer

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Mental health in professional football

Within a football team of 25 players, at least 3 players will report mental health problems over one season





Mental health problems

Mental health problems describe a mental and emotional state that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behaviour or mood.

Mental health problems cover a broad range of disorders such as feelings of distress, anxiety, depression, sleep problems or substance abuse.

Mental health problems are common: they affect about one in four people. Among professional football players, the rate is even higher.



Anxiety

- Feeling of fear, excessive worry and/or irritability
- Being easily fatigued
- Loss of self-confidence



Distress

- Feeling worried and tense, with a lack of interest and energy for daily life activities



Sleep disturbance

- Having difficulties falling asleep or waking up frequently during the night
- Feeling unrested and still tired after a night
- Feeling irritable or sleepy during the day



Depression

- Feeling under strain, unhappy and depressed
- Having problems concentrating, to enjoying day-to-day activities, making decisions and overcoming difficulties
- Loss of interest and/or pleasure

Causes in everyday life

Mental health is caused by a combination of causes (instead of one single cause).

There are many causes that could hurt people's mental health, such as severe psychological childhood trauma, poverty, social isolation, or life events such as the loss of a parent or a child.

People who have a family history of mental health problems are more likely to develop problems too.



Causes in professional football

Players who suffer 3 or more severe injuries during their career are 2 to 4 times more likely to report mental health problems. Severe injuries are also correlated to post-career mental health problems among retired players.

Players being unsatisfied about their football career are more likely to report mental health problems.

Retired players who are unemployed are more likely to report mental health problems.

Retired players suffering from physical pain (especially knee and ankle) are more likely to report mental health problems.