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Current Concepts in ACL Injury, Surgery, and Rehabilitation

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Abstract: Injury to the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) can be devastating. An estimated 80,000 to 250,000 ACL injuries occur each year in the United States. ACL injuries are the most prevalent of internal knee lesions and can result in short-term physical impairments and long-term joint morbidity. The purpose of this intermediate-level course is to provide physical therapists and physical therapist assistants with an overview of the etiology and risk factors of isolated ACL injuries; to discuss pertinent clinical examination, classification, and prognosis after ACL injuries and reconstruction; and to review interventions relevant to successful outcomes after injury or surgery. With the modifications and advancements in ACL surgical procedures and the proliferation of research on interventions and outcomes, many clinicians find it difficult to keep apprised of the latest evidence and integrate into their clinical practice new information that could have a direct impact on patient outcomes. Decisions regarding which patients are appropriate for nonoperative management of an ACL-deficient knee, how to safely progress patients through a criterion-based guideline, and when to provide recommendations for safe return back to sports after ACL injury or reconstruction are challenging. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants will be able to use the knowledge and skills outlined in this course with their patients immediately after ACL injury or surgery in order to maximize patients' response to exercise at their current functional level while minimizing risk of injury to the healing tissue.