Government of **Western Australia**
Combat Sports Commission

ECU EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

Understanding Athlete Health After Combat Sports Contests

MMA and Muay Thai | 26 Western Australian events | 14-month study

Health problems include injuries, illnesses, pain and mental health concerns, even when they do not prevent training. Athletes reported problems **7 days after competition**, with weekly follow-up on their worst problem.

What did athletes report?

175 competitors → 238 responses

Some competitors responded after more than one contest.

146 (61%)
responses: no health problem

92 (39%)
responses: at least 1 health problem

411 reported health problems
Reported by 81 competitors across 92 contest participations

315 injuries
Multiple problems could be reported

96 illnesses
Injuries and illness can occur together

Training impact at 7 days

Percentage of all 238 responses | % (number of responses)



Health impact and recovery

Substantial health problems

26 problems

26 of 90 assessed (29%); 2 missing. Moderate/severe reductions in training or performance at 7 days.

Most of the worst health problems resolved within

3 weeks

Median days: MMA 20 | Muay Thai 16. Incomplete follow-up may underestimate recovery time.

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Doherty CS, Barley OR, Fortington LV. **Incidence of Health Problems in Australian Mixed Martial Arts and Muay Thai Competitors**. Sports Medicine–Open. 2025;11:60. doi.org/10.1186/s40798-025-00880-3