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Trauma no drama: Care and treatment of dancers

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Dance medicine is similar to sports medicine, treats the specialized needs of dancers. The art of dance parallels sport with the human body as the vehicle for performance. While the aesthetic of dance differs from sport, dancers train differently than athletes and often periodization is not implemented in dance training. As the performances near, rehearsals often increase at full speed. Overtraining becomes a common cause of dance injuries, but the choreography makes dance ever so risky. The choreography of today places new demands on the dancers. The inclusion of aerial maneuvers, acrobatic work, and elaborate set designs raise both the risk for injury and the nature of those injuries. Aerial work and acrobatic maneuvers are included in both concert and commercial performance. The dance environments have become spectacular from Las Vegas stages, film special effects and the raked stages of opera houses. Similar to athletes, dancers are not at risk for traumatic injuries. At the Dance Medicine Center, we have seen traumatic injuries resulting from both choreography and the dance environment. The needs of the dancer are different than the athlete. It is critical for the medical community to understand dancers especially in care, diagnosis and treatment. This presentation will feature a case study of a traumatic dance injury documented from onset to recovery. In addition, video links of current choreography will provide orthopedic surgeons an insight into the world of dance today.

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