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**ASSOCIATION OF RINGSIDE PHYSICIANS RELEASES STUDY OF  
HEAD INJURY-RELATED MORTALITY IN COMBAT SPORTS**

Madison, WI – The Association of Ringside Physicians (ARP) is proud to announce the release of a special report examining mortalities resulting from head injuries in combat sports between 2000 and 2019. The report is published in a special supplement to the ARP Journal of Combat Sports Medicine and authored by ARP President Dr. John Neidecker, DO, ATC, FAOASM, and Dr. Joshua Martin, OMS-III.

The ARP is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting combat sports athletes by educating the combat sports community on best practices in ringside medicine, providing ongoing medical training to ringside physicians, and advocating for uniformity and effective enforcement of ringside medical standards worldwide.

In 2019, two fighters, Maxim Dadshev and Hugh Alfredo Santillan, died within the space of a week from head injuries sustained during professional boxing matches. These tragedies led some authorities to call for a ban on combat sports. While past studies have examined the prevalence of chronic traumatic brain injury in career combat sports athletes, few studies to date have specifically examined fatalities resulting from head injuries sustained during competition. Understanding and minimizing risk to fighters requires a thorough accounting of this data as well.

“There is risk inherent in combat sports,” said Dr. John Neidecker, President of the ARP Board and the study’s primary author. “The purpose of this study is to identify fatality trends in professional boxing matches over the last twenty years and to take note of any findings that could be used to improve athlete safety in combat sports.”

This study drew on the Manuel Velazquez boxing fatality data collection and on the BoxRec records database. Inclusion criteria were restricted to fatalities due to brain injury sustained directly from competition. The data showed that of the 428,904 professional boxing bouts helped between 2000 and 2019, 84 head injury-related fatalities occurred, an incidence of approximately one fatality per 5,000 bouts.

The report found that fatalities were more likely to occur when boxers were in lower weight classes, bouts continued into later rounds, or a fighter lost via knockout or technical knockout (KO/TKO). Of these factors, loss via KO/TKO showed the highest correlation with fatality, with 76% of the fatalities studied showing association with a KO/TKO.

“One clear finding from this report is that swift action must be taken by the medical team after a KO/TKO to evaluate and ensure the safety of the athlete,” said Dr. John Neidecker. “Continuing to evaluate these trends over time will show an increasingly clear picture of risk factors and trends associated with head injury-related fatalities in combat sports events.”

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### **About the Association of Ringside Physicians**

The ARP is a membership-driven nonprofit organization that protects athletes worldwide by advocating for best practices in combat sports safety and by providing ongoing medical education to the broader boxing and mixed martial arts communities. Members include physicians, allied healthcare professionals, students, members of governmental commissions, sanctioning bodies, promoters, trainers, and others involved in providing for the health, safety, and welfare of those participating in both amateur and professional combat sports.