

Assessing Athletic Psychological Readiness When Returning to Sport

Emele Chaddock

Mentor: Dr. David Coppel



Background

- A lot of research on psychological factors on injury & recovery, not a lot on psychological readiness
- Psychological measures / testing for readiness to returning to sports after major injury
- Tackling a different concept: 'unreadiness'
- What would we want to know that would stop us from letting someone return
- Link between the psychological factors and their importance when returning to sports
- Developed a structured interview and then a scale based Questionnaire
- Questionnaire developed around 'red flags'
 - Qualities that predict negative return to play

Importance and Applications

- Psychological readiness is important and not talked about enough
- Components of psychological readiness are not often explored by trainers or doctors
- All major physical injuries to athletes are also psychological injuries
- Having a clinical sport psychologist can play a major role on the sports medicine team
- May be something used to alert trainers and physicians
- College and pros trend: mental health issues and psychological factors in athletes are becoming more and more acknowledged and a concern
- Psychological readiness to return to work or other activities
 - Interview and scale may be implicated for individuals with non-sports related injuries (i.e. surgeries)



Research & Difficulties

- Scale question example: “I feel as if I lost myself during recovery”
 - Correlated interview question: “During the recovery process, did you feel like you lost any part of yourself in regards to your identity as an athlete?”
- Major model: Podlogs et. Al Qualitative Research Study
 - Touched upon topics we developed as our ‘red flags’ e.g. fear, anxiety, confidence
- Rephrasing questions (reverse) & role playing
- Many factors associated with positive return to play outcomes, none with negative outcomes
- Context of adolescence (developing brain), high school, college (drinking, parties), or pros
- Athletes can easily produce ‘white flags’ saying they’re ok
- If we find one red flag, we don’t know if they are ‘no-go’ signs they are just areas we use to probe further into the topic and if it can become problematic

“cognitive and affective factors influence behavioral responses (e.g. adherence, behavioral coping, social support seeking behaviors,) which in turn impact physical and psychological social recovery outcomes” - Podlog

Personal Connections

- Former D1 college athlete and have had personal experience with major injuries and recovery
- Have seen teammates mentally struggle with returning to play after a major injury
- Personal experience with a sport psychologist was extremely helpful in my recovery
- Was not asked anything like this during my rehab
- Want to help spread awareness and spark a discussion

Plans For The Future

- Pilot the questionnaire to see if it has clinical or predicted value in athletes
- Using the interview on athletes to probe the importance of these issues
- Work with Dr. Coppel to produce a program to respond to the red flags
- Work in progress
 - Create different versions, tackle different aspects (culture, gender, sport)
- Explore how people respond based on their culture
 - Subcultures: Sports culture, gender influences (i.e. males more dishonest opposed to females), ethnic or cultural influences (i.e. how they perceive pain or emotional issues)

Thank You

- Dr. Richard Ellenbogen and Mrs. Sandra Ellenbogen
- Jana Pettit
- Jim Pridgeon
- Dr. Christine Mac Donald
- UW Neurological Surgery Donors, Faculty, Staff, and Residents
- Dr. David Coppel