Aariana Grant
2114215
Narrative review

Research proposal-A narrative review of the effects of exercise on the psychological well-being of elite athletes.

Objective- To discover elite Athletes' perception of the benefits of mental health on their overall performance and wellbeing.

Introduction/ Background

The purpose of this article is to discover elite athletes' perception of the benefits of mental health on their overall performance and wellbeing. Mental health symptoms and disorders are common among elite athletes (Reardon et al., 2019). The advantages of cultivating mental fortitude within the realm of athletics extend beyond the realm of physical prowess and performance, profoundly impacting the holistic well-being of athletes. Optimal mental health empowers athletes to confront adversities and withstand pressure, bolstering their capacity to surmount challenges with enhanced resilience, cognitive acuity, and a greater level of consistency in their physical performance (Crust, 2007). An athlete can be defined as an individual who has dedicated themselves to rigorous training and exercises, striving for excellence in competitive sports (Last, 2007). On the other hand, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) defines an elite athlete as individuals competing at a professional, Olympic or Collegiate level (Reardon et al., 2019). In the context of mental health, psychological well-being assumes a pivotal role, encompassing both hedonic and eudaimonic facets of happiness, as well as resilience - the ability to navigate emotional regulation, problem-solving, and the capability to maintain sound mental equilibrium (Tang et al.,2019). Psychological well-being is gauged through a tripartite assessment, which incorporates positive affect, life satisfaction, moral purpose, social support, and optimism (Boylan, Tompkins & Krueger, 2022).

When addressing the body of evidence concerning the mental health and well-being of elite athletes, one must acknowledge the paucity of high-quality, systematic studies (Rice et al.,2016). The significant increase of data on the mental health and psychological well-being of elite athletes is due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the adverse effects on the population (Toresdahl & Asif, 2020). The available research reveals elite athletes' susceptibility to a spectrum of mental health challenges, inclusive of substance misuse, often attributed to injuries, overtraining, and external non-sport-related factors (Rice et al., 2016). Moreover, traumatic experiences, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), may be manifested when triggered by specific situations in the athlete's psyche (Kindbridge Behavioral Health, 2022). Notably, injury constitutes a traumatic event within the sporting context that has the potential to engender PTSD, thereby profoundly influencing overall athletic performance (Kindbridge Behavioral Health,2022). Interestingly, studies indicate that the mental well-being of both male and female athletes generally surpasses various other health parameters (Grasdalsmeen et al., 2022). In December 2019, the World Health Organization was informed about a predominantly viral illness derived from Wuhan, Hubei Province, China commonly known as Covid-19 (SARS-CoV-2) (Cascella et al., 2023). This global pandemic resulted in lockdown restrictions and non-negotiable social isolation guidelines which raised unprecedented mental health issues in the sporting community (Shukla et al., 2023). Risk factors such as mental and cardiovascular diseases in athletes have risen among elite athletes as a result of covid restrictions such as isolation which can lead to lack of exercise, a low income and fear of losings one’s job (Shukla et al., 2023). This stress can then make athletes more vulnerable to contracting the covid-19 disease as stress raises catecholamine and suppressor T cell levels, this would then repress the immune system raising the risk to contract the viral infection (Salleh, 2008).

Micheal Phelps, the first Olympic swimmer to earn a spot on five Olympic teams stated that for twenty years, his self-care was not up to par. He went on to say that prioritizing one's mental health on a daily basis has given him the chance to become a better version of himself (Landsverk, n.d). While the importance of mental health is gaining an increasing amount of attention, the prevalence of mental health symptoms and disorders in current elite athletes ranges from nineteen percent (19%) for alcohol misuse to thirty-four percent (34%) for both anxiety and depression (Gouttebarge et al., 2019). Management strategies should address all the contributing

factors regarding to mental health symptoms by taking a comprehensive, integrative approach while taking into consideration the Biopsychosocial factors that are pertinent to athletes to increase the benefits and reduce the harm (Reardon et al., 2019).

The mental health of elite athlete is not only dependent on their self-care but the relationships between athletes and their coaches are also very important (Powers et al., 2020). Social support from coaches may have the potential to alleviate the mental well-being of athletes. Studies have shown that coaches recognize that their role is more than just the gym. Instead, it includes the encouragement of a healthy lifestyle and allowing athletes to feel safe enough to ask for support (Mazzer and Rickwood, 2014)

Undoubtedly, the mental well-being of elite athletes holds a pivotal role as it not only exerts a discernible impact on their performance but also plays a crucial role in averting injuries. The convergence of physical health and mental well-being is an inextricable linkage that requires meticulous attention (Roger's et al., 2023). This research topic has been chosen to add to previous data to increase the knowledge of mental health to not only elite athletes and trainers but the general public as well and future athletes.The topic has gained a lot of spotlight among researchers, sport practitioners and the media (Ekelund, Holmström and Stenling, 2022). Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of physical exercise on the psychological well-being of elite athletes and to elucidate the perspectives athletes harbor concerning their mental health.

Objectives & Aims

The proposed study has developed 4 main aims. They are as follows:

1- To discover if exercise aids in the reduction of stress.
2- To identify if exercise makes an athlete feel more energized.
3- To determine if mental health has an impact on an athlete's overall performance and wellbeing.
4- To identify any possible barriers holding athletes back from prioritizing their mental health.

5- Provide recommendations to reduce the percentage of poor mental health among athletes.

Methodology

This study would be done in the form of a Narrative review as they tend to take a less formal approach in compassion to writing a systematic review (Japan et al., 2016). The study focuses on discovering the perception both male and female elite athletes possess on the benefits of mental fortitude within the realm of physical activity. Both genders were chosen to be a part of this study because it is important to gather data on both sexes as their mental health are of equal value. Several procedures were done to ensure the result of a high-quality review article was presented. Information would be heavily based on recently obtained information (2018-2023) while still highlighting information from older sources to be able to compare the mental health of elite athletes then in comparison to now and if athletes are more aware of the benefits they can obtain from strong mental health. Information for this study would be derived from electronic databases as it is listed as one of the most efficient ways to gather information for a study of such nature (Green et al., 2006). It has been discovered that many researchers tend to rely on Medline database with the belief that a sufficient amount of information can be derived from there only but that is not the case (Green et al., 2006). It is especially important that a researcher uses a minimum of two database sources for their area of study in order to put out a descriptively thorough study (Green et al., 2006). Therefore, data for this study would be gathered from PubMed, Google Scholar, Textbooks and Medline where necessary.

This study would take the route of a Narrative review; thus, the overall design of this research would use several study methods such as Qualitative approach, reason being is that phenomena in regard to one's experiences, practices and attitudes may be difficult to document in an accurate fashion if done in a Quantitatively. Therefore, the qualitative approach was chosen as it allows individuals to discuss thoroughly what they are thinking and why (Tennyson et al., 2022). Being able to do so would enable not only the researcher but the general public to have a deeper understanding of the phenomena while qualitative would make you ponder on questions that can’t easily be put into numbers to be comprehended (Cleland, 2017). Additionally, pure

research, Ecological and Epidemiology studies would be applied to give the researcher a deeper understating of the topic. Research would be varied on studies written in English and also translated from another language (Spanish, French, Welsh etc) to English. This would be done so that the researcher and the public would be able to have insight on a broader population of Elite athletes.

Research Timetable

Table 1. Shows a draft timetable of the timeframe in which dissertation sections should be completed.

Task	Details	Date
Research Proposal	Completed version of research proposal would be reviewed by lecturer and submitted a day before deadline.	October 2023
Dissertation	Draft of Introduction and Methodology should be completed to then be reviewed by lecturer. Draft of Discussion, conclusion and Recommendations should be available for review by lecturer. Completed version of Written dissertation should be submitted.	December 2023 January 2024 April 2024

Oral Presentation	Presentation should be completed. Presentation should be practiced with and without the group to become familiar with format and to make sure the allotted time is met. Presentation should be submitted.	March 2024 March- April 2024 May 2024

Word count- 1575

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