

Psychological Impact of an Athlete's Life

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ABSTRACT

Injuries are a common occurrence for athletes that are active in competitive sports. When an athlete is injured, many emotions are at play and can provide a powerful impact psychologically. **PURPOSE:** This research will identify any psychological impact from an injury on an athlete's overall life. The data gained will be instrumental in providing a basis for clinician education and intervention development.

METHODS: Participants completed a 21-question survey through Qualtrics for this study. All of the participants are current or recently retired in the last five years NCAA Division 1 athletes. Out of the 21 questions, 12 of them are multiple choices. 2 of the questions were pick all that apply and the remaining 7 were based on a Likert Scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree).

Demographics recorded via the survey included specific sports, biological sex, age, injury type, surgery or non-surgery. In addition, if time loss from play had any role in psychological changes in athlete's life was also noted.

RESULTS: Of the 46 anonymous survey participants from different current and recently retired NCAA D1 athletes, 14 identified as male and 32 identified as female. The frequency of the answers chosen was compared using either an independent samples t-test or ANOVA. There was no significant difference noted when running an independent samples t-test comparing if their injury required surgery and the impact that had on the athlete's anxiety level when returning to play ($p=.836$). On another independent samples t-test, there was a significant difference noted between athletes who played football and those that played volleyball regarding their anxiety level for return to play ($p=0.001$). In total, 50% of all participants selected that they agree to this statement that they felt anxious upon return to play. However, 77% agreed that they felt relaxed now while taking the survey.

CONCLUSION: After investigation of these results, it showed that athletes do experience psychological changes when the injury first occurs and upon returning to play. Yet, for this group, no impact on the mental health of these athletes overall life was noted. This study can produce many more research questions along the lines of bringing awareness to psychological impacts on athletes after injuries.