

Athletes Expectations About Physiotherapy in Sports Injury Rehabilitation: A Literature Review of Qualitative Studies

Nitika Jesingh¹, Poonam Dhankher², Rajni Batra Malik³,
Dimple Choudhry⁴

¹MPT Sports, College of Physiotherapy, Pt. B.D. Sharma UHS Rohtak, Haryana

³Registrar, Haryana State Council of Physiotherapy

^{2,4}Assistant Professor, College of Physiotherapy, Pt. B.D. Sharma UHS Rohtak, Haryana

Abstract

Within the sports injury team, physiotherapists play a vital role in sports injury rehabilitation. An effective athlete-physiotherapist relationship is essential for proper treatment and achieving athletes' injury rehabilitation objectives. As a result, one of the most important considerations in designing a sports injury rehabilitation programme is to address players' expectations. The goal of this study was to investigate players' perceptions of physiotherapy in sports injury rehabilitation. Medline/PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, PEDro and Cochrane Library databases were electronically searched using Boolean operators and MeSH key heading to include the pertinent articles for the last 15 years. This review included 3 high quality articles identifying athletes expectations about physiotherapy in sports injury rehabilitation and need for strong athlete-physiotherapy relationship for effective treatment and return to play.

Keywords athletes, expectations, physiotherapy

Introduction

The 'sports industry' has become extremely competitive and lucrative for athletes as a result of the increased popularity of sports on a global scale, with many players aiming for the greatest levels of professionalism. Sports have become more physically and psychologically taxing, their training and practice requirements have increased, and the risk of harm to those participating has increased. In today's competitive sports, injured players are frequently pressured to return to competition as quickly as possible, which is a demand made by both the athlete and the team administration. Sports injury rehabilitation, as contrasted with conventional rehabilitation after injury, necessitates more emphasis and a highly planned, sports-specific approach, and should thus prepare the athlete and wounded tissue for the physical and psychological demands of competing at the highest level.^[1] Studies from throughout the world stress the link between the demands of the sport and the risks of injury. Unfortunately, a lack of research and literature on structured programs for injury management and prevention among Indian athletes shows that our nation falls short when compared to more developed nations such as the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom.^[2]

Athletes and Sports Injuries:

Injuries in sports can occur through contact or noncontact approaches and they can be acute or chronic. Stress fractures are relatively peculiar to sports and overuse, involving muscle, ligaments, or bone. Knee injuries are extremely common. Knee trauma can cause meniscal and chondral lesions, which are sometimes combined with cruciate ligament damage. Ankle injuries account for 21% of all sports-related injuries. Ankle ligament sprains (incomplete tears) are more common (83%) in sports like basketball and volleyball.^[3] Participating in sports provides various health benefits, but it also entails the danger of injury. Athletes of all ages experience a wide range of soft tissue, bone, ligament, tendon, and nerve injuries as a result of direct damage or repetitive stress. Different sports are connected with different patterns and types of injuries, whereas age, gender, and activity type (e.g. competitive versus practise) influence injury prevalence.

Psychological response to sports injury and rehabilitation:

Injured athletes typically face a variety of psychosocial issues, which might change throughout the recovery process. It was shown that during the early phases of rehabilitation, athletes frequently displayed frustration and melancholy owing to their unexpected absence of sport activity. As they progressed through the middle stages of their rehabilitation programs, some athletes displayed apathy and poor adherence (i.e., doing too much or too little), which could be a result of a lack of motivation to complete the required rehabilitation exercises or a sign of impatience and eagerness to return to sport. The psychological origin of sport injuries is mostly associated with Andersen and Williams’ (1988; see also Williams & Andersen, 1998) stress-injury model, which incorporates multiple perspectives and historical currents of psychologically oriented research on injury aetiology. The Stress and Injury model outlines how psychological factors enhance the likelihood of injury in sports. When an individual is exposed to a potentially stressful environment, his or her stress reaction determines whether or not an injury happens. This stress response is regulated by three factors: personality, stressor history, and coping resources, and it can be mediated by interventions.^[4]

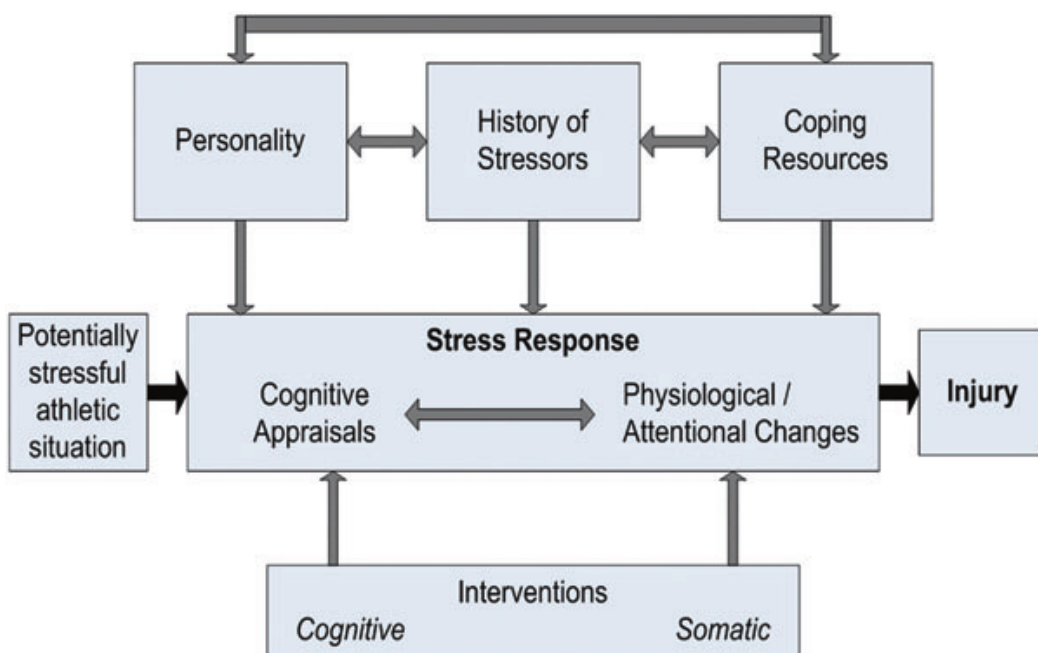


Figure 1: Stress-injury model by Andersen and Williams(1998)

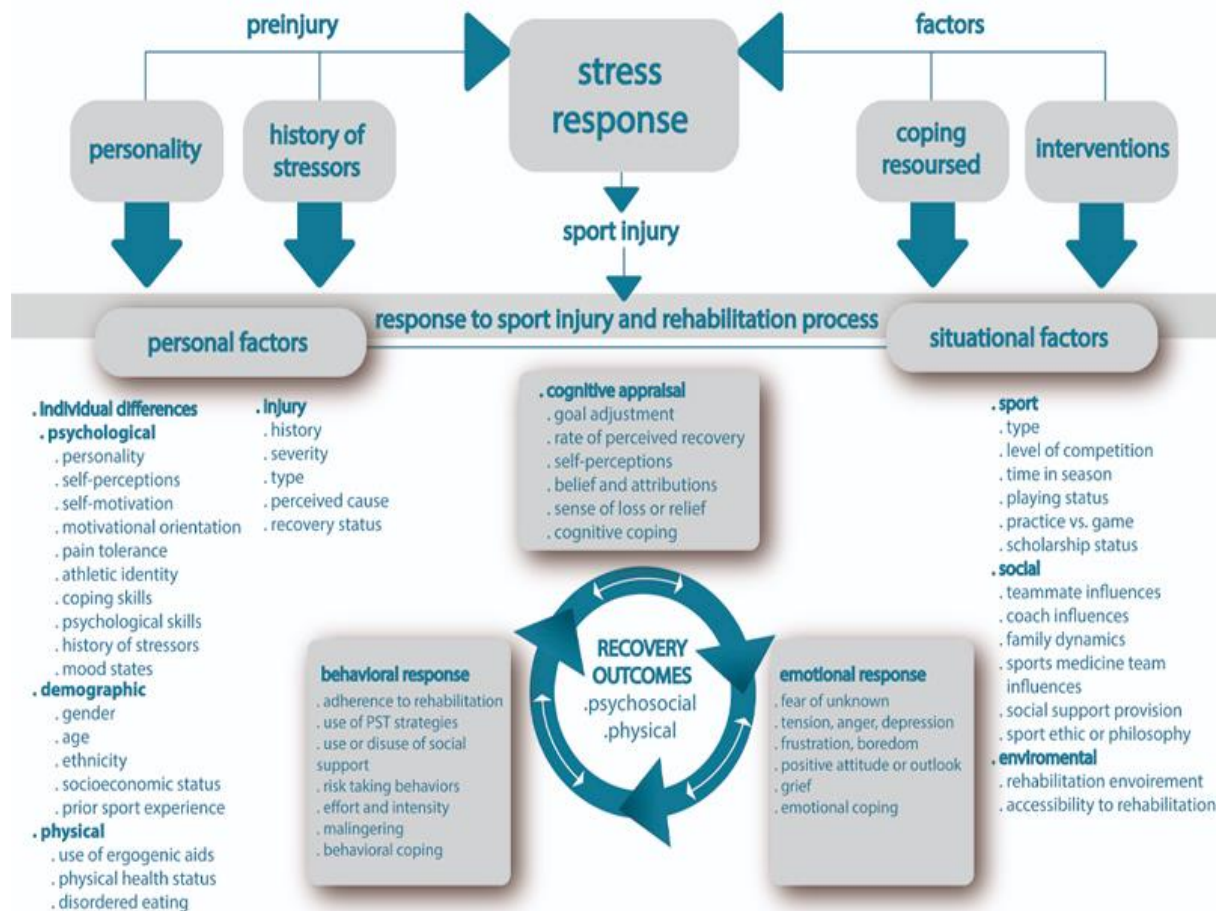


Figure 2: The integrated model of psychological response to the sport injury and rehabilitation process (Wiese-Bjornstal et al., 1998) provided a framework for understanding the influence of personal and situational factors individual psychological response to sport injuries.^[5]

Athlete Perspectives on Physiotherapy:

In order to be cautious and avoid re-injury, an athlete will hold back, pause, heavily tape the wounded part, and not offer 100% effort. Sports injury rehabilitation comprises more than simply repairing physical damage and returning to pre-injury levels of physical performance; it also entails determining how the injury affected the athlete psychologically and how it may hinder the rehabilitation process. The primary purpose of physiotherapy in injury rehabilitation is to fully heal the athlete after an accident or surgery in order to prevent further harm and expedite their return to competition.^[9] Thus, strong social support from physiotherapists has been shown to assist athletes in adopting a more cheerful outlook on their recovery path, which may be seen in their firm faith in the rehabilitation process. A strong athlete-physiotherapist relationship is necessary for effective treatment and meeting athletes' expectations of injury rehabilitation. Athletes' cognitive ideas regarding rehabilitation, such as treatment efficacy, self efficacy, and treatment satisfaction, have also been reported to be influenced by physiotherapists.

Authors, Journal, Year	Objectives	De-sign	Methods	Results
Jonathan Quartey et al. 2019 ^[6]	The aim of this study was to determine athletes' expectations about physiotherapy in sports injury rehabilitation.	Cross sectional study	The data was collected using the expectation about athletic training (EAAT) questionnaire from 120 recruited athletes of different sporting disciplines	There was a significant difference ($p < 0:05$) between competition level and athletes' expectations.
Clement et al 2015 ^[7]	To document injured athletes' psychosocial responses during the different phases of injury rehabilitation.	Qualitative study	A total of 8 previously injured athletes (4 men and 4 women) participated in the study. The data was collected using semi structured interviews, transcribed verbatim and analyzed by directed content analysis.	Initially, athletes' cognitive appraisals were predominately negative in nature, leading to negative emotions. During the reaction-to-rehabilitation phase, athletes reported mixed cognitive appraisals and identified frustration as the main emotional response. When returning to sport, athletes reflected on the lessons learned, yet they expressed some doubts related to their ability to return to play. These cognitive appraisals served as a precursor to the resulting emotional responses of nervousness and reinjury anxiety, as well as excitement.
Scott Martin et al 2008 ^[8]	To examine attitudes of athletic trainers (ATs) and physical therapists (PTs) on the effectiveness of mental imagery, goal setting, and positive self-talk to improve rehabil-	Qualitative study	The ATs and PTs were contacted via electronic or physical mailings to complete a single administration survey that measured their beliefs about the effectiveness of psychological skills for increasing adherence and recovery speed of	Mean differences were found on attitudes about effectiveness of psychological skills for those who reported formal training and those who reported interest in receiving formal training.

	<p>self-talk to improve rehabilitation adherence and recovery speed of injured athletes and physical therapists (PTs) on the effectiveness of mental imagery, goal setting, and positive self-talk to improve rehabilitation adherence and recovery speed of injured athletes</p> <p>To examine attitudes of athletic trainers (ATs) and physical therapists (PTs) on the effectiveness of mental imagery, goal setting, and positive self-talk to improve rehabilitation adherence and recovery speed of injured athletes.</p> <p>and physical therapists (PTs) on the effectiveness of mental imagery, goal setting, and positive self-talk to improve rehabil-</p>			
--	---	--	--	--

Discussion

According to the current review of literature, physiotherapists should understand that psychological aspects must be addressed in order to optimise injury rehabilitation outcomes. The athlete expects the physiotherapist to be professional as well as mature in their decision-making. A physiotherapist must provide psychological support such as motivation, social support, communication/active listening, and

pain management strategies when working with an athlete. According to some study, cognitive assessments during rehabilitation may include a mix of positive and negative appraisals, and that these appraisals can have a significant impact on the resulting emotions and behavioural reactions.^[10]

Conclusion

The current study focuses on athletes' expectations of physiotherapy in sports injury rehabilitation, however data that clarifies these difficulties is still insufficient. Qualitative studies of athletes' expectations indicated that physiotherapists should create a welcoming, loving, and trusting environment that allows for self-disclosure and personal improvement. A rehabilitation environment of this type may promote compliance, faster healing, and a more positive experience. Athletes who anticipate less from a physiotherapist during the injury rehabilitation process may benefit from social support, communication/active listening, relaxation, and visualization tactics.

References

1. Dhillon H, Dhillon S, Dhillon MS. Current Concepts in Sports Injury Rehabilitation Indian J Orthop. 2017 Nov-Dec;51(6):724]. *Indian J Orthop.* 2017;51(5):529-536.
2. Chen Y, Buggy C, Kelly S. Winning at all costs: a review of risk-taking behaviour and sporting injury from an occupational safety and health perspective. *Sports Med Open.* 2019;5(1):15. Published 2019 May 2.
3. Nicola Maffulli, Umile Giuseppe Longo, Nikolaos Gougoulas, Dennis Caine, Vincenzo Denaro, Sport injuries: a review of outcomes, *British Medical Bulletin*, Volume 97, Issue 1, March 2011, Pages 47–80.
4. Hackfort, Dieter & Kleinert, Jens. (2011). Research on sport injury development: Former and future approaches from an action theory perspective. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology.*
5. Diane M. Wiese-bjornstal, Aynsley M. Smith, Shelly M. Shaffer & Michael A. Morrey (1998) An integrated model of response to sport injury: Psychological and sociological dynamics, *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 10:1, 46-69.
6. Quartey J, Afidemenyo S, Kwakye SK. Athletes' expectations about physiotherapy in sports injury rehabilitation in greater Accra region. *Hong Kong Physiother J.* 2019;39(2):101-114.
7. Clement D, Arvinen-Barrow M, Fetty T. Psychosocial responses during different phases of sport-injury rehabilitation: a qualitative study. *J Athl Train.* 2015;50(1):95-104.
8. Hamson-Utley JJ, Martin S, Walters J. Athletic trainers' and physical therapists' perceptions of the effectiveness of psychological skills within sport injury rehabilitation programs. *J Athl Train.* 2008;43(3):258-264.
9. Lee S-M. Finnish athletes' expectations about physiotherapy in sport injury rehabilitation. Master's thesis, Department of Sport Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, 2011.
10. Podlog L, Heil J, Schulte S. Psychosocial factors in sports injury rehabilitation and return to play. *Phys Med Rehabil Clin N Am.* 2014;25(4):915-930.



Licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)