ANALYSIS OF ELITE ATHLETES' READINESS TO VISIT A PSYCHOLOGIST WITH ISSUES OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE

Dace Eikena, Mg.psych.

National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski", Sofia, Bulgaria

ORCID
Dace Eikena – 0009-0003-5176-975X

ABSTRACT

There are various social, cognitive, and behavioral factors that significantly affect the performance of sports in training and results in competitions. And on many of these issues, psychological support is very important.

This study aimed to analyze the main factors which interfere with athletes' performance and identify athletes' willingness to visit a sports psychologist to help solve the issues.

This study surveyed 43 summer sports athletes with successful performing experience in international competitions. The average age of these athletes was 19,3 years and 44,2% were women.

The Sport Interference Checklist (SIC) was used as an assessment tool (Donohue, Silver, et al., 2007). SIC has 26 question formulations and the athletes' answers were on a 7-point Likert-type scale and all answers were summarized in three problem areas: "Problems in the Sports Training Scale", "Problems in Sports Competition Scale" and "Desire for Sport Psychology Scale", each of which has a sub-scales that was analyzed.

The results of the study indicate a high interest (90,7%) of athletes to visit a psychologist with performance issues. The results of the analysis showed that the most frequently mentioned problems with which athletes would like to visit sports psychologists were dysfunctional thoughts and stress related to both training and competition situations. According to the athletes 'self-assessments, problems that hinder the athletes' performance are more often experienced during the competition.

The results of this study can be used in applied psychologists' practices and as a starting point for the development of targeted training programs for psychologists who would like to work in the field of applied sports psychology in Latvia in the future.

Keywords: *elite athletes, factors that interfere with sports performance, Sport Interference Checklist , sports psychologist*

АНАЛИЗ НА ГОТОВНОСТТА НА ЕЛИТНИТЕ СПОРТИСТИ ДА ПОСЕТЯТ ПСИХОЛОГ ПО ВЪПРОСИ, СВЪРЗАНИ СЪС СПОРТНОТО ПРЕДСТАВЯНЕ

Даце Ейкена, докторант

Национална спортна академия "Васил Левски", София, България

РЕЗЮМЕ

Съществуват различни социални, когнитивни и поведенчески фактори, които оказват значително влияние върху спортните постижения по време на тренировки и състезания. Психологическата подкрепа е много важна за справянето с възникващите в тази връзка проблеми.

Целта на настоящото проучване е да се анализират основните фактори, които препятстват представянето на спортистите, и да се установи готовността им да посетят спортен психолог, за да им помогне да решат проблемите.

Обект на изследването са 43 спортисти, практикуващи летни спортове, които имат успешен опит в международни състезания. Средната възраст на изследваните спортисти е 19,3 години. От тях 44,2% са жени и 55,8% мъже.

За реализиране на целта на изследването е използван Контролен списък за спортни проблеми (SIC) (Donohue, et al., 2007), който включва 26 въпроса. За оценка е използвана 7-степенна скала Ликертов тип. Въпросите са обединени в три проблемни области: Проблеми в спортната тренировка, Проблеми в спортното състезание и Желание за спортна психология.

Резултатите от изследването показват висок интерес (90,7%) на спортистите да посещават психолог при проблеми, свързани с постиженията. Най-често споменаваните проблеми, чиито решения търсят спортистите при посещение на спортни психолози, са дисфункционалните мисли и стресът, свързани както с тренировъчни, така и със състезателни ситуации. Според самооценките на спортистите проблемите, които пречат на представянето им, се проявяват по-често по време на състезание.

Резултатите от това проучване могат да бъдат използвани в практиката на психолозите, както и като отправна точка за разработване на целенасочени програми за обучение на психолози, които биха искали да работят в областта на приложната спортна психология в Латвия.

Ключови думи: елитни спортисти, фактори, препятстващи спортното представяне, контролен списък на спортните проблеми, спортен психолог.

INTRODUCTION

High-performance sports require a lot from the involved athletes. Performance in most sports is determined by the athlete's daily high-intensity long physically hard practicing hours, tactical and technical training, and high emotional load during both preparation and competition periods. And every athlete could face different challenges in their sports career. As we can see from competition results and the results of research in the field of sports psychology, only physically and mentally strong people can do their best in sports, and therefore it is important to evaluate the factors that promote or hinder sports performance and provide appropriate physical and psychoemotional support.

Recent advances from researchers in the field of sports psychology have shown the importance of the application of psychological techniques in the daily practice of athletic training. The science of sports psychology is gathering evidence and developing best practices to assess psychological skills and strategies that have the potential to improve sports performance. Nicholls and Polman, (2007) in their research had gathered evidence that psychological intervention in sport is very important to increase the success of athletes in any

sport. Among other things, sports psychologists have shown success in helping athletes cope with stress and injury, social support, cognitive restructuring, and improving motivation, forcing coaches and athletes to seek their support more and more. There are an increasing number of athletes, coaches, and other stakeholders around the world accepting sports psychology services based on a growing evidence base of psychological theories and interventions in sport and due to the increase in the number of training programs and prospective professionals.

There are various aspects that are more commonly studied in the field of sports psychology. Currently, there is a growing interest in various aspects of mental health and psychological aspects of mental disorders in sports psychology research. There has also been no decline in interest in demonstrating the effectiveness of new psychological methods in rehabilitation processes and the potential impact of psychological interventions on sports injury prevention (Reverter and Plaza, 2002; Podlog and Eklund, 2006).

Research results support many situations where psychological intervention is needed, However, the situation is still far from ideal. In the study by Pain, M.A., and Harwood, C.G. (2004) identified six dimensions of barriers that emerged from the researchers 'interview data: negative perceptions of psychology, lack of knowledge of sports psychology, integration with players and coach staff, clarity of roles and services, practical limitations, and sports perceived value of psychology. These findings were broadly compatible with the survey data, with finance emerging as a major barrier and misconceptions of sport psychology being common. As well as research results revealed a lack of knowledge of sport psychology that appeared to underpin some of the most significant barriers to entry for sport psychologists. These included lack of clarity concerning the services of a sport psychologist, problems fitting in, and players' negative perceptions of sport psychology. And overall, however, lack of finance was the highest-rated barrier.

Some athletes may be reluctant to use sports psychology services for fear that others will perceive them as "weak" or with psychological problems.

Numerous studies (Anderson et al., 2004; Zakrajsek & Zizzi, 2007; Zakrajsek et al., 2011) have found confidence in sport psychologist consulting as the most significant predictor of intentions to use, or not use, sports psychologist services. Wrisberg and colleagues (2010) indicated in their research that coaches may be afraid of being stigmatized by including sports psychology counselors in the day-to-day team activities. Therefore, they most often ignored the role of sports psychology in the preparation process and did not recommend weekly psychological preparation classes for athletes.

The majority of obstacles that interfere with optimal sport performance typically occur in practice and competitive situations, with up to 99% of athletic endeavors occurring in training situations (McCann, 1995). Moreover, athletes learn requisite skills in practice that strongly influence outcomes in competition. Weinberg and Williams (1998) suggest athletes who display poor mental performance (i.e., inability to concentrate, negative attitudes, poor work ethic, etc.) in practice invariably display such behaviors during competition. For this reason, the assessment of problems that interfere with optimal athletic performance must address both competitive and practice contexts. And this shows that the proposed assessment tools must specifically compare sports problems in both training and competition situations. Until the methodology proposed by Donohue in the beginning of 2000ies, almost all available assessment tools related to athletic performance were specifically suited to competitive situations. Donohue, Silver et al. (2007) developed the Sport Interference Checklist (SIC), which provides a better understanding of athletic performance in general and the assessment of barriers to athletic performance in practice and competition separately. Utilizing a seven-point scale (1= Never, 7 = Always), athletes are prompted to indicate the extent to which various factors interfere with their sport performance in training on the Problems in Sport Training Scale (PSTS) and in competition on the Problems in Sport Competition Scale (PSCS).

The SIC consisted of 26 problem statements, which were systematically derived from focus groups composed of individuals with personal experience participating in competitive sports. For each item, participants were asked to report how often they reported problem interfered with their athletic performance. The factor structure for both the training and competition scales of the SIC was established by Donohue, Silver et al. (2007) in a sample of 141 student-athletes participating in either NCAA or club sports. Principal components analysis was used with varimax rotation. For both the PSTS and PSCS, the number of factors was determined based on the Kaiser-Guttman rule and the screen test. Items with factor loadings greater than .55 were considered salient. Overall, the PSTS scale has high internal consistency, as evidenced by Cronbach's α of .91 . All of the derived factors of the PSTS were significantly correlated with a global measure of psychiatric functioning, indicating the convergent validity of the PSTS. All of the factors were unrelated to measures examining the benefits of sport psychology intervention, demonstrating its divergent validity. The PSCS includes six factors (Dysfunctional Thoughts and Stress, eight items; Academic and Adjustment Problems, three items; Lack of Motivation, four items; Overly Confident/Critical, two items; Injury Concerns, two items; Pain Intolerance, two items). Overall, the PSCS has high internal consistency, as evidenced by a Cronbach's α of .92. Five of the six derived factors of the PSCS were

significantly related to a global measure of psychiatric functioning, indicating its convergent validity, while four of the six derived factors showed no relationship with a measure examining the benefits of sport psychology intervention, supporting its divergent validity. The latter finding makes sense, as a desire to pursue sports psychology interventions for problems that are specific to sports are not symptomatic of general psychiatric functioning.

Understanding the existing problem areas of athletic performance from the point of view of athletes can help practically applied psychologists - to prepare not only for an individual consultation of a particular athlete but also to give a specific orientation to the content of psychological development programs according to athletes' requirements. and to develop sports psychology as a field of psychology in the future.

At present, the psychology of sports in Latvia is not yet widely accepted and popular among athletes, coaches, sports functionaries, as well as psychologists. There are also few studies involving Latvian athletes. And the database of research results in the field of sports psychology in Latvia is small. The results of this study could encourage those involved in sport to make more active use of the opportunities offered by the science of modern sports psychology.

The current study aims to analyze the main factors which interfere with athletes' performance and identify athletes' willingness to visit a sports psychologist. And look for answers to the following research questions in the study:

1. What performance issues are most commonly reported?
2. Identify gender differences in reported issues.
3. Assess the level of athletes' readiness to get assistance from a sports psychologist.

METHODOLOGY

The Sport Interference Checklist (SIC) by Donohue, Silver et al., (2007) for athletes' self-reports was used. SIC consists of 26 problem statement items. For each item, participants are asked to report how frequently the stated problem interferes with their sport performance in sport training (The Problems in Sports Training Scale (PSTS) and sport competition (The Problems in Competition Training Scale (PSCS) utilizing a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 7 = Always). For each of the problem statements, participants an answer with "Yes" or "No" to report if they would visit a sport psychologist to assist with this issue (Desire for Sport Psychology Scale (DSPS)).

At first, one of the two linguistic experts translated the Sport Interference Checklist (SIC), into Latvian. Subsequently, the other linguistic expert translated it back into

English. The final construct of the Latvian version of the SIC was established by an expert group of sport scientist, psychologist, and an English translator.

Initially, respondents were asked to comment on statements if necessary; however, they had no doubts about understanding the statements. Each participant was informed in writing that the research is completely anonymous and voluntary and that participation in it constitutes consent.

In statistic mean and standard deviation, count, and relative count were used for the description of data. T-test was used to compare independent groups, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to describe the association between scales, and Cronbach's α was used to assess scale reliability or internal consistency.

Participants of this investigation are 43 talented athletes. They all perform in 11 different summer individual sports such as tennis, BMX cycling, athletics, canoe, kayaking, rowing, karate, swimming, and some others. They participate in European and World level competitions at their age. Athletes are in age from 15 to 31 years, and the athletes' age M = 19,3 years (SD 3,8 years). There were 24 (55,8 %) men and 19 women (44,2%).

RESULTS

Sport Inference Checklist consists of 3 scales. The first is the Problems in Sports Training Scale (PSTS) consists of 26 7-Point Likert scale items, that give 4 subscales. These 4 subscales are "Dysfunctional Thoughts and Stress", "Academic Problems", "Injury Concerns", and "Poor Team Relationships". Cronbach's α for total scale is the highest 0,847 (95% CI 0,773; 0,906), all subscales showed lower internal consistency, ranging from 0,534-0,606.

The second scale is the Problems in Sport Competition Scale (PSCS), again consisting of 26 7-Point Likert scale items. There 6 subscales are "Dysfunctional Thoughts & Stress", "Academic and Adjustment Problems", "Lack of Motivation", "Narcissism", "Injury Concerns" and "Pain Intolerance**". Cronbach's α for total scale was 0,862** (95% CI 0,795; 0,915), but subscales showed significantly lower Cronbach's α values, ranging from 0,181 – 0,771. The lowest Cronbach's α value is for the Narcissism subscale.

The third scale is the Desire for Sport Psychology Scale (DSPS). This scale consists of 26 "Yes" and "No" items. 4 subscales are "Dysfunctional Thoughts & Stress", "Academic and Adjustment Problems", "Team Relationship Problems" and "Injury Concerns". Cronbach's α for total scale was 0,811 (95% CI 0,719; 0,884), Cronbach's α for all subscales were lower, ranging from 0,442 – 0,704. (see Table 1. for Cronbach's α for each of the factor)

Table 1. *Internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) for each of the factor*

Scale	Cronbach's α	95% CI
PSTS	0,847	0,773; 0,906
Dysfunctional Thoughts and Stress	0,606	0,391; 0,764
Academic Problems	0,541	0,239; 0,736
Injury Concerns	0,534	0,226; 0,732
Poor Team Relationships	0,568	0,202; 0,766
PSCS	0,862	0,795; 0,915
Dysfunctional Thoughts & Stress	0,771	0,650; 0,861
Academic and Adjustment Problems	0,298	-0,165; 0,596
Lack of Motivation	0,487	0,181; 0,698
Narcissism	0,181	-0,513; 0,556
Injury Concerns	0,636	0,329; 0,803
Pain Intolerance	0,434	-0,044; 0,694
DSPS	0,811	0,719; 0,884
Dysfunctional Thoughts & Stress	0,704	0,546; 0,822
Academic and Adjustment Problems	0,555	0,318; 0,732
Team Relationship Problems	0,668	0,470; 0,805
Injury Concerns	0,442	-0,029; 0,698

The distribution of answers and descriptive statistics is summarized for PSTS in Figure 1. and for PSCS in Figure 2.

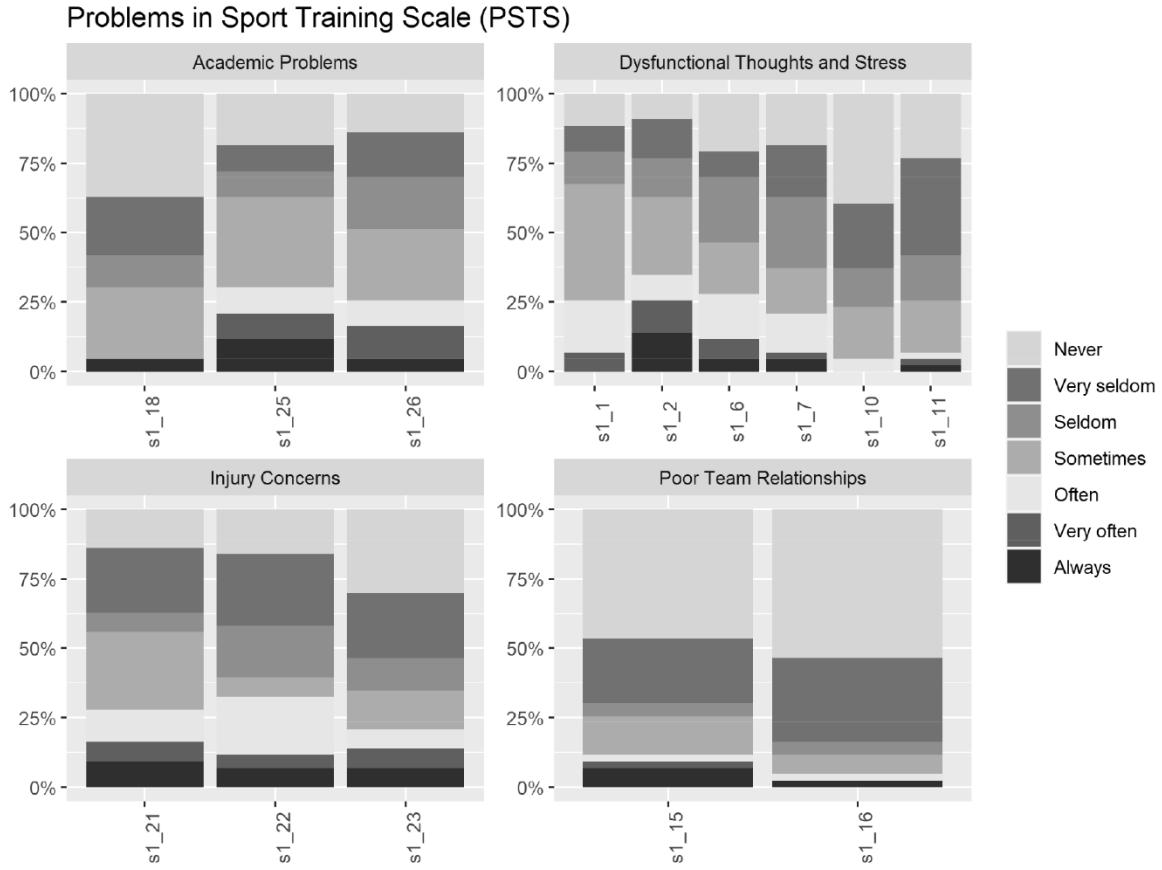

Figure 1. *Distribution of answers for PSTS*

The first research question was “What performance issues are most commonly reported?”

When analyzing the self-assessment responses submitted by athletes, the most commonly reported performance impairments are related to dysfunctional thoughts and stress in both training and competition situations. Fig.1 shows the distribution of answers and descriptive statistics for PSTS, and Fig 2 shows the distribution of answers and descriptive statistics for PSCS.

In training situations “Negative thoughts about personal performance” (item 1) 41% of respondents indicated that their performance is affected sometimes, 25.6% often and very often.

But during the competition, "Negative thoughts about personal performance" (point 1) affects 60.5% of the athletes surveyed in varying degrees of expressiveness.

But when evaluating themselves in connection with “Feeling stressed out” (item 10), athletes show the biggest difference in the assessment of competition and training situations. If 67.4% of the surveyed athletes experience this factor as a nuisance in competitions. In contrast, 62.8% of athletes deny the disruptive effect of this factor in training .

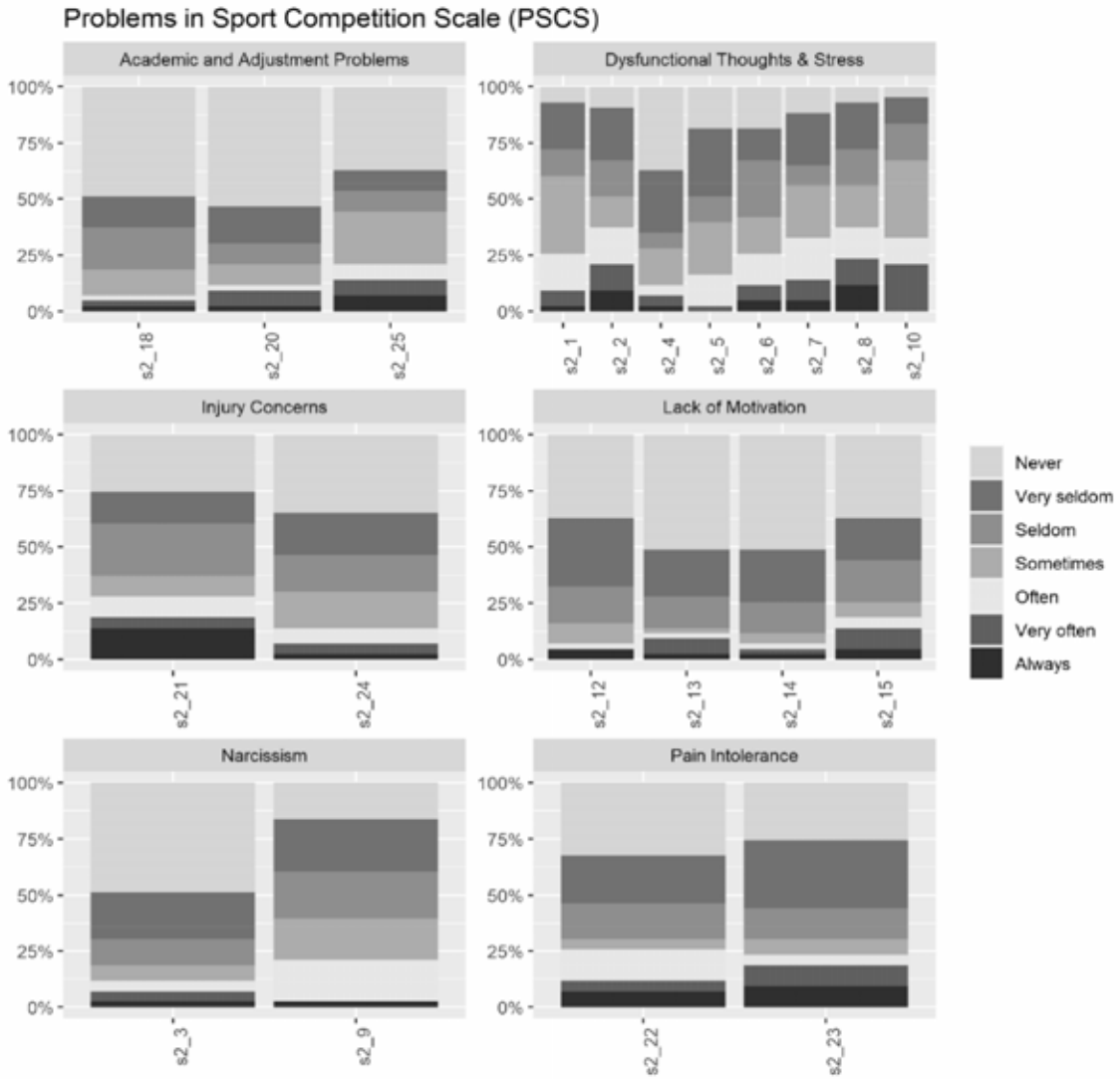

Figure 2. *Distribution of answers for PSCS*

On the subscale of “Dysfunctional Thoughts and Stress”, the following are also disturbing factors:

In “Being too critical to myself” training, a total of 59.8% of the surveyed athletes identified it as a disturbing factor in various degrees of expression.

In the competition situation, this factor is less disturbing: 46.2% of athletes mark it as disturbing, but in general, 48.9% of athletes have little effect on .

In competition situations, 55.8% of athletes mentioned “Overconcerned or worry much about what others think about my performance” .

“Difficulty relaxing” was mentioned as a disruptive factor in the competition situation by 55.9% of the surveyed athletes .

On this scale, as a factor that does not interfere with sports performance training, “Hard to recover mentally once mistakes are made” was most often mentioned by a total of 74.5% of the surveyed athletes.

Athletes did not indicate "Injuries" as a disruptive factor in the competition in most of the answers. In contrast, in training situations, “Fear of getting injured or sick” (item 21) was mentioned by 55.8% of the surveyed athletes as a factor negatively affecting their sports performance.

It is also interesting to note that item 22 (“Difficulties dealing with physical pain”) in the PSTS subscale "Injury" and the PSCS subscale “Pain intolerance” is rarely, very rarely, or even never mentioned in athletes' self-assessment responses.

Specifically in the competition situation: 32.6% of the surveyed athletes answered "Never", 20.9% of the athletes were disturbed by "Very rare"; but 16.3% of the surveyed athletes “Rare” (in total 69.8% of the surveyed athletes). In training situations: overall, 60.5% of athletes choose to deny this factor or point it out as an obstacle infrequently.

In the subscale “Academic and Adjustment Problems” (item 25) “Maintaining an acceptable grade point average” is assessed as a significant factor influencing athletic performance in training in a total of 62% of athletes' responses. In the competition situation, 37.2% of athletes performance are never affected, but 23.3% affected only sometimes.

The second question of the study was to determine the level of readiness of athletes to visit a sports psychologist in the face of factors that interfere with athletic performance in training or competition.

The results of the study indicate that 90.7% of athletes have expressed a wish to visit a psychologist in case of performance problems. Looking at the number of problems that athletes would turn to a sports psychologist, there was a marked difference in the athletes' self-assessment answers. From 2 problems that the athlete is ready to talk about, to 17 situations in which the athlete would like to receive the support of a psychologist (on average 6.3 issues). Only 4 athletes (2 men and 2 women) have no interest in using a sports psychologist’s assistance at all.

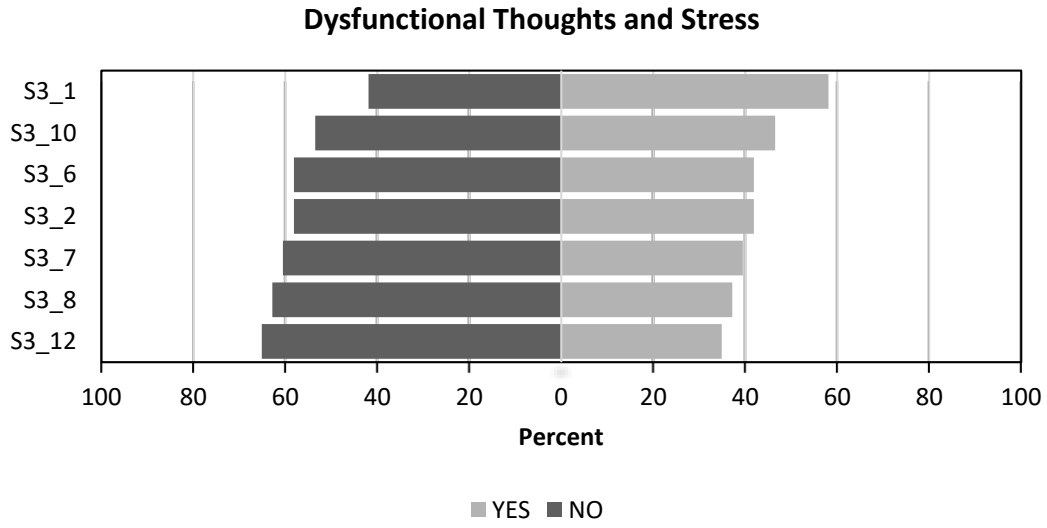

Figure 3. *Distribution of answers for DSPS subscale "Disfunctional Thoughts and Stress"*

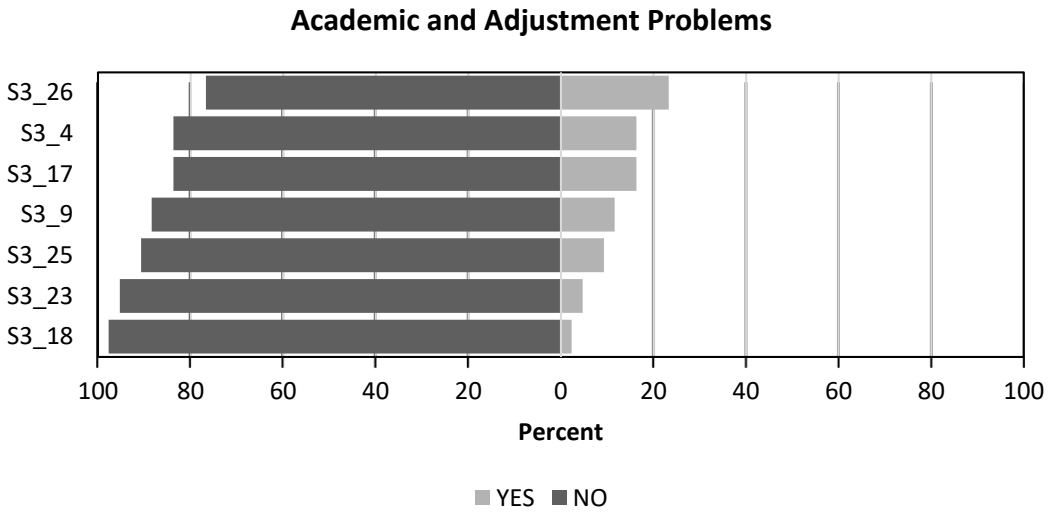

Figure 4. *Distribution of answers for DSPS subscale "Academic and Adjustment Problems"*

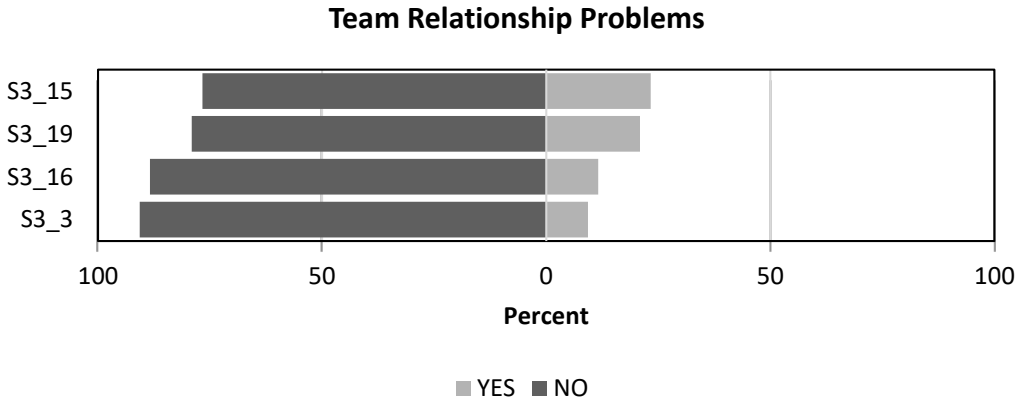

Figure 5. *Distribution of answers for DSPS subscale "Team Relationship Problems"*

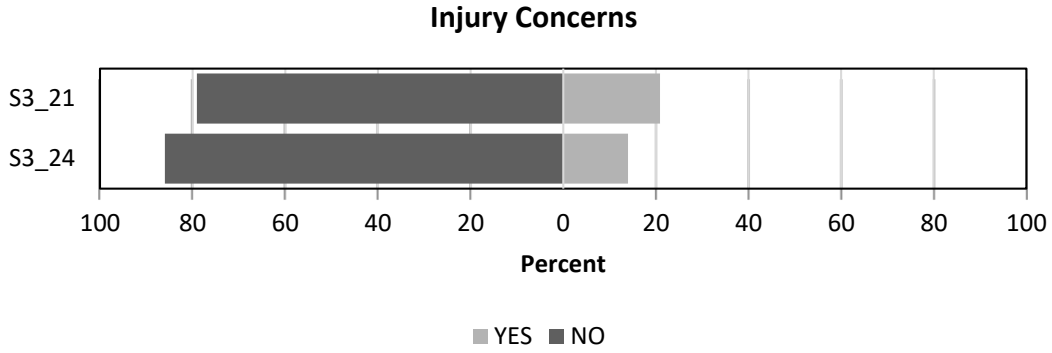

Figure 6. *Distribution of answers for DSPS subscale "Injury Concerns"*

Analyzing the desire of athletes to visit a psychologist on specific issues in each of the DSPS subscales, it was found that the answers provided by athletes differed greatly. If 58.1% of athletes were ready to turn to a psychologist in cases when they had negative thoughts about their performance, then only 4.7% of athletes would turn to a psychologist with issues about medication for injuries, and 2,3% of athletes if they have had stress due to lack of money.

The results of descriptive statistics in the DSPS subscale "Dysfunctional thoughts and stress" showed the highest desire of the athletes for the involvement of a psychologist. When 58,1% of athletes respond desire to visit a psychologist in case of «Negative thoughts about personal performance» (SIC item 11), but 46,5% of athletes respond desire to visit a psychologist in case of «Feeling stressed out» (SIC item 10) and 41,9% of athletes respond desire to visit a psychologist in case of «Being too critical to myself» and «Difficulty thinking positively once negative thoughts have occurred» (SIC item 6) . And 34,9% of athletes respond desire to visit a psychologist in case of «Inability to motivate or push myself» (SIC item 12).(Figure 3.)

The second DSPS subscale "Academic and Adaptation Challenges" had far fewer positive responses about attending a psychologist's consultation. The highest positive scores in this subscale in the case of «Difficulty with time management (how to fit everything in)» (SIC item 26) were only 23,3 % of athletes responded desire to visit sports psychologists. Less frequently noted issues in this subscale in the case of «Used prescribed medication to assist in the management of injury" (SIC item 23) were 4,7% of athletes responded desire to visit a psychologist and in case of «Problems or stress due to lack of money» (SIC item 18) when 2,3% of athletes respond to desire to visit a psychologist.(Figure 4.)

In the third DSPS sub-scale "Problems in Team Relationships" the number of positive answers from athletes about the desire to visit a psychologist is a much smaller thing n the previous subscales. Only 23,3% of athletes respond desire to visit a psychologist in case of «Problems with my coach (es)» (SIC item 15) A less frequently noted problem in this subscale

was in a situation when «Being too critical with teammates» (SC item 3) when 9.3% of athletes refer to the desire to visit a psychologist, (Figure 5.)

The results of the athletes' responses on the DSPS subscale "Injuries for injury" were relatively modest: 20,9% of athletes respond to a desire to visit a psychologist in case of «Fear of getting injured or sick» (SIC item 21) and only 14% of athletes in case of «Worrisome thoughts of past injuries» (SIC item 24) (Figure 6.)

The answers provided by athletes show that athletes see the role of a psychologist only in certain situations. However, the role of sports psychology counselors in situations such as health and post-traumatic rehabilitation, or academic and relationship issues is not sufficiently accepted (possibly underestimated).

The third research question raised interest in identifying gender differences in the problems reported by athletes. All scales and subscales were compared between gender as shown in Table 6. And all total and subscales showed no statistically significant differences between women and men (all p>0,05) These results were similar to those found in the Donohue, Silver et al (2007) study.

Table 6. *All SIC scales and subscales compared between gender.*

Characteristic	Overall, N = 431	Women, N = 191	Men, N = 241	p-value2
Problems in Sport Training Scale (PSTS)	43,0 (10,9)	45,3 (9,5)	41,1 (11,8)	0,210
Problems in Sport Competition Scale (PSCS)	61,3 (17,2)	64,6 (14,5)	58,8 (18,9)	0,255
Desire for Sport Psychology Scale (DSPS)	4,8 (3,5)	5,4 (3,1)	4,4 (3,8)	0,374
Dysfunctional Thoughts and Stress (PSTS1)	19,1 (5,5)	20,5 (4,6)	18,0 (5,9)	0,117
Academic Problems (PSTS2)	9,8 (3,8)	10,2 (4,2)	9,5 (3,5)	0,556
Injury Concerns (PSTS3)	9,8 (4,0)	9,9 (4,0)	9,8 (4,1)	0,934
Poor Team Relationships (PSTS4)	4,2 (2,6)	4,6 (3,1)	3,9 (2,2)	0,379
Dysfunctional Thoughts & Stress (PSCS1)	27,6 (8,2)	29,2 (7,7)	26,4 (8,4)	0,258
Academic and Adjustment Problems (PSCS2)	7,4 (3,4)	7,9 (3,4)	7,1 (3,4)	0,441
Lack of Motivation (PSCS3)	9,1 (4,1)	9,8 (4,4)	8,5 (3,8)	0,313
Narcissism (PSCS4)	5,3 (2,3)	5,0 (2,2)	5,5 (2,4)	0,447
Injury Concerns (PSCS5)	6,0 (3,2)	6,6 (3,5)	5,5 (2,9)	0,249
Pain Intolerance (PSCS6)	5,9 (3,1)	6,1 (2,4)	5,8 (3,7)	0,747
Dysfunctional Thoughts & Stress (DSPS1)	3,0 (2,1)	3,4 (2,0)	2,7 (2,1)	0,304
Academic and Adjustment Problems (DSPS2)	0,8 (1,2)	0,8 (1,1)	0,8 (1,2)	0,981
Team Relationship Problems (DSPS3)	0,7 (1,0)	0,9 (1,1)	0,5 (0,9)	0,188
Injury Concerns (DSPS4)	0,3 (0,6)	0,3 (0,6)	0,4 (0,7)	0,413
1Mean (SD)				
2Welch Two Sample t-test				

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study indicate the most commonly reported athletes' performance impairments are related to dysfunctional thoughts and stress related to both training and competition situations. The rarely expressed issues that interfere with performance were poor team relationships in the training process, injury concerns, and pain intolerance in the competition.

There were no gender differences in athletes' perception of issues that interfere with sports performance.

The main interest of this study was to analyse the desire of athletes to attend a consultation with a sports psychologist about the factors that interfere with athletic performance in training or competition situations. If more than half of the athletes were ready to turn to a psychologist in case of negative thoughts about their performance, then only a few of the involved athletes would turn to a psychologist with issues about injuries, and if they have had stress due to lack of money. In the self-assessment checklist, the most common situations when an athlete would like to seek professional advice were the case of negative thoughts about his / her performance, feeling of being stressed out, being too critical of himself/herself, and having difficulty thinking positively once negative thoughts have had occurred.

The results of this study are likely to stimulate interest and understanding for athletes and coaches about the key issues that hinder athletic performance and the wider use of psychological counselling as one of the ways to solve problems.

Absolutely a lot of informative and educational work is still needed to popularize the field of sports psychology among athletes and support personnel (coaches, trainers, physicians, etc) and psychologists in Latvia. And the results of this study can be used as a starting point for the development of targeted training programs for psychologists who would like to work in the field of applied sports psychology in Latvia in the future.

REFERENCES

Anderson, A.G, Hodges, K. P., Lavallee, D., & Martin, S. B. (2004). New Zealand athletes' attitudes towards seeking sport psychology consultation. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology,* 33, 129-136.

Anderson, A., Miles, A., Mahoney, C., & Robinson, P. (2002). Evaluating the effectiveness of applied sport psychology practice: Making the case for a case study approach. *Sport Psychologist,* 16, 432–453.

Donohue, B., Dickens, Y., Lancer, K., Covassin, T., Hash, A., Miller, A. and Genet, J. (2004). Improving athletes' perspectives of sport psychology consultation: a controlled evaluation of two interview methods. *Behavior Modification*, 28, 182-193.

Donohue, B., Silver, N.C., Dickens, Y, , Covassin, & Lancer, K (2007). Development and initial psychometric evolution of the sport interference checklist. *Behavior Modification*, 31(6), 937-957.

Pain, M. A. and Harwood, C. G. (2004). Knowledge and perceptions of sport psychology within English soccer. *Journal of Sports Science*, 22, 813-26.

Reid, C., Stewart, E. and Thorne, G. (2004). Multidisciplinary sport science teams in elite sport: Comprehensive servicing or conflict and confusion? *The Sport Psychologist*, 18, 204-217.

Nicholls, A. R. and Polman, R. C. (2007) Coping in sport: A systematic review. *Journal of Sports Science,* 25, 11-31. Review

Smedley, Justin Robert, (2013.) "Coaches' Attitudes Towards Sport Psychology Services: A Study of NCAA Division I Head Golf Coaches." Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes/2455

Portenga, S. T., Aoyagi, M. W., Balague, G., Cohen, A., & Harmison, B. (n.d.). Defining the practice of sport and performance psychology division 47 (exercise and sport psychology) of the american psychological association. Retrieved from http://www.apadivisions.org/ division-47/about/resources/defining.pdf

Rooney, D., Jackson, R.C. & Heron, N. (2021). Differences in the attitudes to sport psychology consulting between individual and team sport athletes. BMC Sports Sci Med Rehabil 13, 46 https://doi.org/10.1186/s13102-021-00271-7

Wrisberg, C. A., Loberg, L. A., Simpson, D., Withycombe, J. L., & Reed, A. (2010). An exploratory investigation of NCAA Division-I coaches' support of sport psychology consultants and willingness to seek mental training services. *The Sport Psychologist*, 24, 489-503

Wylleman, P., Harwood, C. G., Elbe, A. M., Reints, A., & de Caluwé, D. (2009). A perspective on education and professional development in applied sport psychology. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise,* 10, 435–446. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2009.03.008

Corresponding author:

Dace Eikena, Mg.psych.

National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski"

Department of Psychology, Pedagogy and Sociology

E-mail: iancheva.tatiana@gmail.com