RESEARCH BRIEF

Examining postsecondary athletes' cognitive beliefs about sport setbacks



In the Fall of 2021, 200 competitive postsecondary athletes (Canada & USA) responded to an online survey about their cognitive beliefs related to sport setbacks during COVID-19. Dr. Parker and the ACME team would like to thank all participants as well as SSHRC for funding this research. Here is a summary of some findings we think are interesting.

Participants:

- 72% women, 26% men, and 2% nonbinary
- The most commonly declared faculty/program was psychology
- 136 of the participants were from the USA and 64 were from Canada

Athletes considered a significant sport setback (some examples listed). Notably, 25% of the setbacks were related to COVID-19 and 60% were related to injuries.

shattering external weight balance achilles practice myself gyms CO VID Syndrome lost shin team leg knee depression financial bad burnout Femur arguing hip glass minor Patella another being ACL facilities Tendonitis member moved skilled thumb better • state • stomach self-doubt health fractured school lack believing flu first spinal ankle tore sprain MCL splints meniscus feedback complete stress muscle work mental hamstring closed shoulder hand forefinger commitment cut pandemic lower gain school-sport surgery pain teammate coach shortness student plantar foot broken fibula dislocated fracture talented accident back sprained academics Pneumonia wrist fatigue constraints closures

quarantine

torn over

Family

concussion

Cognitive beliefs can impact how athletes deal with setbacks. Primary control (PC) reflects a person's beliefs about their capacity to influence their environment. Secondary control (SC) reflects a person's capability to accept and internally adjust to their environment. We asked athletes about their PC and SC beliefs when thinking about a critical setback in their sport.



- PC -

"It is likely something good will come out of the problem"

- SC -



More athletes wanted to resolve their setback (PC) but many struggled to see much benefit coming from the setback (SC). Future steps for this work will involve examining whether enhancing PC and SC beliefs through intervention can help athletes cope with sport setbacks.

> Please check our website here as more information on this project becomes available. This research brief was created by Gabrielle Pelletier (March 2022)