



Grant Information Summary:

Psychological Distress and Coping Following Athletic Injury: Impact Upon Rehabilitation

The purposes of the investigation were to: 1) assess the extent, severity, and duration of psychological distress among male and female collegiate athletes incurring an athletic injury; 2) determine the prospective associations among psychological distress, coping, and athletic injury rehabilitation compliance; 3) develop a screening profile of student-athletes at risk for severe psychological distress and rehabilitation noncompliance.

The investigation assessed the extent of psychological distress among severely injured high school and college athletes, and evaluated the degree to which injury-related and behavioral factors could be used to predict prolonged psychological distress and possible rehabilitation noncompliance. Our data suggest that significant, but time-limited, mood and sleep disturbance occurs among seriously injured high school and collegiate athletes. Injured athletes were also significantly more likely than controls to experience clinical depression (24% and 8%, respectively). We also evaluated athletes who had completely physi-

cally recovered from their injuries and found that they continued to report a greater degree of post-traumatic distress and worry over injury as compared to athletes without a recent injury history. The degree of distress paralleled that observed among other traumatic injury groups. Our data further indicated that, in addition to injury severity, level of pre-injury mood disturbance and negative expectancy predicted post-injury maladjustment, and athletic trainers were not able to accurately rate injured athletes' level of emotional distress. However, a brief screening and post-injury assessment of athletes mood and sleep behavior may identify ath-

letes who are at risk for prolonged emotional distress. Considering that psychological distress and its behavioral manifestations (e.g., sleep disturbance) may play a role in reha-

bilitation compliance and physical recovery, athletic trainers may benefit from instruction in brief behaviorally based screening procedures.

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Publications & Presentation List

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