

Collegiate Athletes' Responses to Medical Retirement

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Background

Prior Research

- Psychological risks of athletic injury (athletic identity, anger, boredom, depression, frustration, etc.)
- Behavioral response (adherence to rehabilitation)
- Post traumatic growth theory
- Stress and coping theory

Goals

- Connect PTG and stress and coping theories to career-ending injuries in collegiate athletes
- Understand the impact of support groups
- Take a case series approach for studying individual experiences

Recruitment & Interviews

Recruitment	Interview Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Case-series approach: 3 recently medically retired female athletes<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Personalizes the responses○ Sheds light on specific aspects of human thinking and behavior○ Highlights the range of responses● Participants recruited from support group	<p>Pre-support group (Interview 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tell me about your experience in college sports prior to medical retirement.● What are you hoping to gain from the support group?● How was the decision made to medically retire? <p>Post-support group (Interview 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Can you tell me about your experience in the group?● Has your outlook on life changed?● Did you develop a sense of personal/psychological growth?

Analysis and Code Book

Interview Time 1							
Injury (I)	Mental (M)	Physical (P)	Social (S)	Spiritual (Sp)	Retirement (R)	Group (G)	
Severity	Stress	Pain	Isolation	Changes	Forced	Concerns	
Physical Therapy	Loneliness	Fatigue	Connection to team		Accepted	Goals	
First time	Lack of Confidence	Change in workout routine	Attitude towards Team/Coach		Parental role	Hopes	
Repeat Injury	Fear	Life Impact	Pressure		Coach role		
Diagnosis	Lack of motivation	Limitations	Status		other influencers		
	Boredom	Improvements	New Relationships				
	Depression						
	Athletic identity						
	Frustration						
	Body image						
Interview Time 2							
Injury (I)	Mental (M)	Physical (P)	Social (S)	Spiritual (Sp)	Personal Growth (PG)	Group (G)	
Progress	New interests	Pain	New Relationships	Changes	New goals	Positives	
Acceptance	Changes in body image	Progress	New Role on Team		New outlook	Negatives	
Denial	Post-retirement Adjustmen	Strength	Time Management		Job	Helpful overall	
Physical Therapy	Mood	Impact on post-career life	Support		Self realization	Influence on decisions	
	Athletic identity changes	New fitness goals	New opportunities		Inner strength		
	Lack of motivation						
	Confidence						

Results (Interview 1)

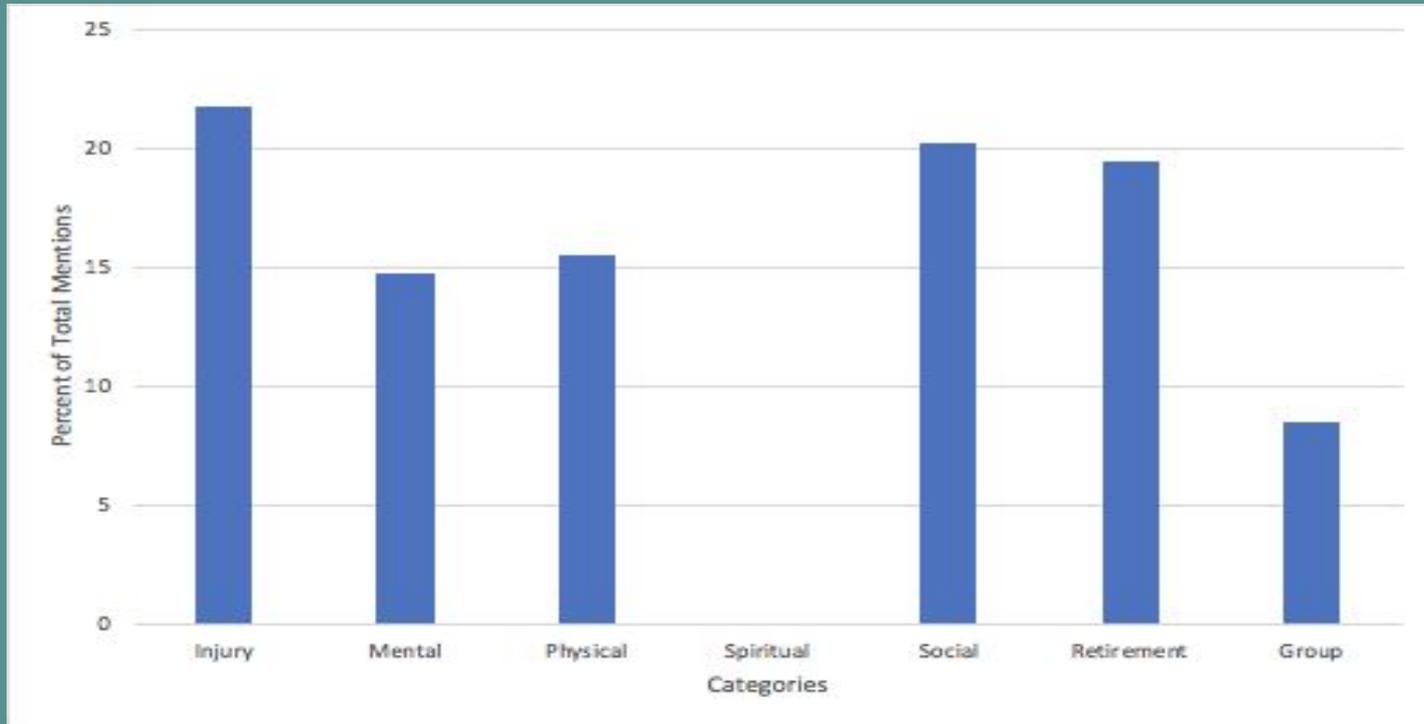


Figure 1. Interview one percentages of total mentions among the 3 participants. No changes in spirituality were mentioned. The injury, social, and retirement categories were most significant.

Results (Interview 2)

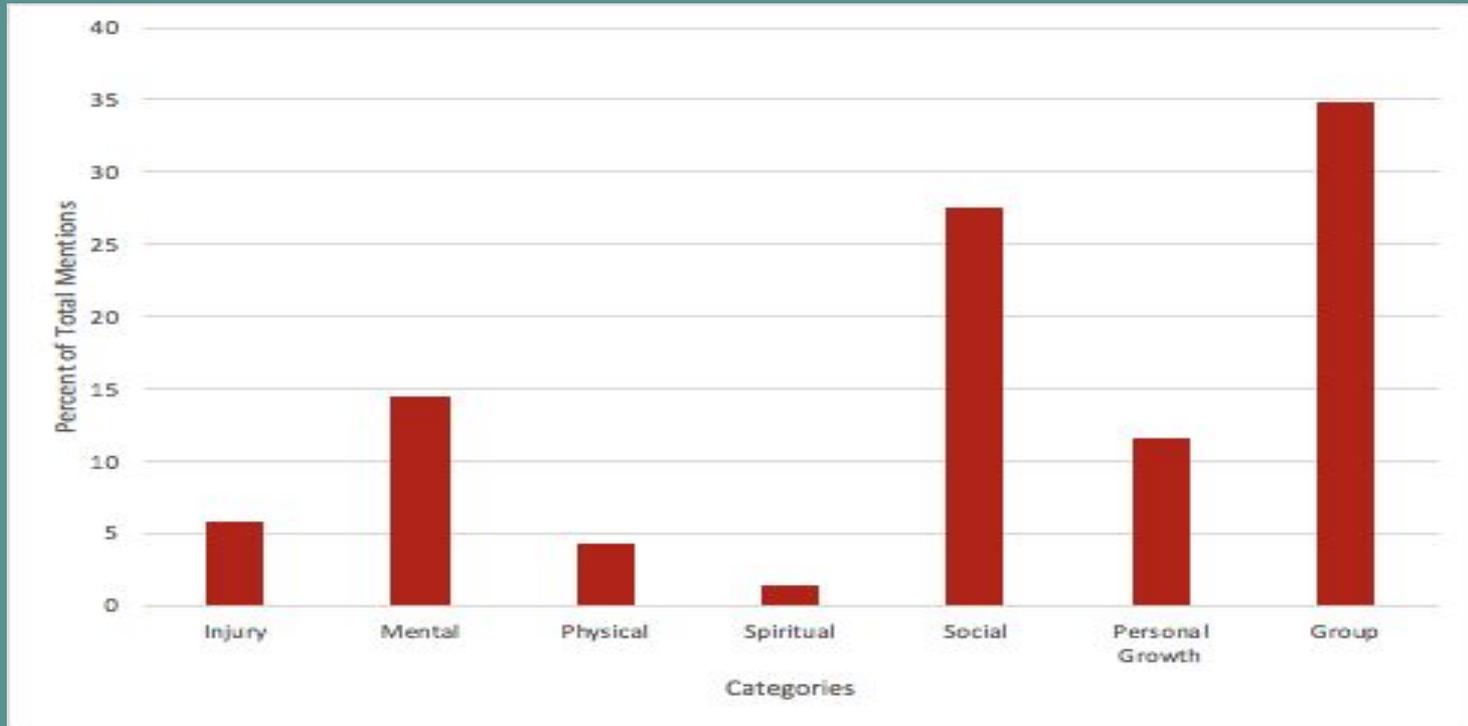


Figure 2. Interview two percentages of total mentions among the 3 participants. Mentions of injury and physical pain decreased significantly between interview one and two. All mentions in the physical category were in reference to progress. Spirituality was mentioned once by one participant.

Discussion

Findings	Quotes
Post-traumatic growth (relationships, hobbies, outlook)	“Definitely a change in perspective” “I always know it can be worse” “Definitely had to become stronger” “Rewarding to act as a mentor”
Stress and coping theory (external locus of control)	“I didn’t quit, you [coaches and coaching staff] pushed me into medical retirement”
Variation (team vs individual sports; first time vs repeat injury)	“Our team is just very stressful like everything you do is ranked” “It’s not like this is my first injury”

Limitations

**Small
sample size**

Self-reporting

**Convenient-sample
recruiting**

Takeaways and Implications For Practitioners

Takeaways	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Loss of connection to team (2/3)● Changes in athletic identity (3/3)● Loss of athlete status (2/3)● Benefited from support group (3/3)● Experienced personal growth (3/3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support group that is tailored towards fostering deeper connections with other retired athletes● Different strategies for team vs individual sports● Individual therapeutic interventions that focus on identity building● Peer-mentor based therapy

Thank you!

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