



Protecting Mental Health in Sport and Exercise (PROMISE) conference in Edinburgh (UK), 20–21 September 2025

Poster and short oral presentation abstracts

The 2025 Protecting Mental Health in Sport and Exercise (PROMISE) conference was held in Edinburgh (UK) on 20th and 21st September. The program had an exclusive focus on mental health in elite sport from early detection to long-term support and was constructed by key members of the IOC Mental Health Consensus group – Dr. Brian Hainline, Prof. Margo Mountjoy, Prof. Vincent Gouttebarger, Prof. Alan Currie, and Dr. Claudia Reardon.

A highly valued poster session and a series of short oral presentations were integral to the conference alongside the keynote sessions and longer symposia and are published here.

The prize for best oral presentation was sponsored by the International Society for Sports Psychiatry and presented by its president, Dr Carla Edwards, to Dr Wojciech Walencki who accepted on behalf of his team for their work entitled “From Screening to Support: A Nationwide SMHAT-1 System for Olympic and Paralympic Athletes”.

Alan Currie

Knowledge and attitudes towards sport-related concussion amongst key stakeholders in cricket: a cross-sectional survey of two counties

N Dobbin¹, R Bagde^{2,3}, H Rashid⁴, A Anand⁵, J Ashbrook⁶

¹*Sport and Exercise Medicine, Department of Health Professions, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK*

²*Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospital, Warrington and Runcorn, UK*

³*Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, Nottingham, UK*

⁴*Department of Emergency Medicine, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Manchester, UK*

⁵*Elysium Healthcare, Edinburgh, UK*

⁶*Department of Physiotherapy, Liverpool Hope University, UK*

Sports-related concussion (SRC), a form of mild traumatic brain injury (TBI), can result from direct or indirect head impacts and may present clinical symptoms without visible pathology. Despite its known consequences, SRC remains under-investigated in amateur cricket. Head impact rates range from 2.0 to 7.2 per 1000 player days, with 2.0 to 2.3 concussions – equating to 2–7 head impacts across nine matches, two of which typically result in SRC. While batters facing fast bowlers are most at risk (~16%), all field participants – including wicketkeepers, bowlers, and close fielders – are vulnerable. To assess SRC knowledge and attitudes, a cross-sectional online survey was conducted among players, coaches, safeguarding officers (SGOs), and umpires affiliated with Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire County Cricket Clubs. Approved by Manchester Metropolitan University (Ref: 53914), the study used the Rosenbaum Concussion Knowledge and Attitude Survey Student version (ROCKAS) and ran from June to September 2023. Seventy-six stakeholders responded (mean age 46.9 years; average cricket involvement 14.9 years). Of these, 25% had experienced SRC, and 16% had suspected but unreported concussions. 63% had witnessed head impacts; only a third discussed it with the individual, 38% suspected symptoms, and 60% reported it to staff. Concussion knowledge scores ranged from 80–82%, and attitude scores from 83–88% across roles, indicating generally high awareness. However, gaps were evident in recurrence risk (Q2), amnesia symptoms (Q11), and coma misconceptions (Q13).

of the same race. Racial-ethnic minority student athletes are at risk for poorer mental health outcomes due to stigma towards utilization of services. To improve the mental health outcomes of racial-minority student-athletes, interventions need to focus on team education, recruiting diverse faculty and providers, improving means to report discrimination, and mental health screening to promote earlier service utilization. Overcoming these disparities is crucial for physicians to meet the mental health needs of these athletes.

Development of an audio and visual toolkit to support mental health in athletes

C Kent^{1,2}, M McGuigan^{3,4}

¹Department of Physiotherapy, Institute of Health, University of Cumbria, Carlisle, United Kingdom

²Women's Football Hub, Linlithgow, United Kingdom

³Occupational Therapy Department, Cumbria Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust, Newcastle, United Kingdom

⁴Willow Grove Consultants, Sunderland, United Kingdom

Athletes often experience significant emotional challenges including poor performance, negative thoughts, and difficulties with emotional regulation, all of which can impact their mental health and performance. Despite these challenges, only about 22% of elite athletes seek help for mental health concerns, highlighting barriers such as team culture and fears over confidentiality. Building on the ecological systems framework which emphasises mental health literacy and personal development, we developed a brief, accessible audio-visual toolkit targeting common emotional challenges in athletes. The mental health and recovery toolkit consisting of four short podcasts in audio and video format has episodes on 'Dealing with Emotions', 'Dealing with Negative Thoughts', 'Dealing with Poor Performance', and 'Guided Progressive Muscle Relaxation.' Each podcast provides specific strategies such as breathing exercises, mindfulness, and progressive muscle relaxation, supported by natural imagery and captions to enhance accessibility. Background videos include green and blue spaces, designed to promote relaxation and focus. The toolkit is freely available online on all major podcast platforms and YouTube, enabling athletes to access support discreetly in environments like changing rooms or during travel. While podcasts have shown promise in health education and behaviour change, evidence specific to mental health outcomes in athletes is limited; therefore, the toolkit is positioned as an adjunct, not a replacement, for professional care. Further research is required to assess its effectiveness and potential

for broader implementation in mental health literacy and athlete support strategies.

Cultivating mental health care in elite athletes in Japan: implementation of SMHAT-1 and the IOC Toolkit

Y Ojio

The University of Tokyo, Japan

Mental health care in elite sports has evolved from individual clinical intervention toward a systems-based approach that emphasizes early identification, literacy education, and team-level care. Building on our previous research validating the Japanese version of the Sport Mental Health Assessment Tool 1 (SMHAT-1), we explored factors influencing mental health help-seeking behavior among Japanese rugby players. Our findings revealed that even players with high mental health knowledge and low stigma did not necessarily seek professional help, particularly when experiencing more severe symptoms. This gap indicated the limitation of knowledge-based approaches alone and highlighted the need to engage support from those close to athletes. In response, we developed a brief Mental Health Literacy (MHL) program targeting athlete peers and team staff, grounded in the IOC's Mental Health in Elite Athletes Toolkit (Japanese translation). The program aimed to foster mental health literacy, reduce stigma, and strengthen psychological safety within teams. Post-intervention evaluation showed increased confidence in recognizing signs of distress and initiating supportive conversations. These results suggest that improving the everyday mental health literacy and care behaviors of those embedded in athlete environments - rather than relying solely on professional intervention - may offer a culturally responsive and sustainable pathway to well-being. This presentation argues that athlete-centered mental health care should be integrated into the culture of sport itself, through empowered interpersonal relationships and accessible tools. We invite further dialogue on how to design and implement such inclusive systems in diverse sporting and cultural contexts.

Restless leg syndrome in competitive athletes: a case report and review of the literature

J Sandhu¹, E Kramer², U Cho¹, K Im¹

¹Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, Sports Psychiatry, University of California, Irvine, California, USA