



Interprofessional Healthcare Teams: Promoting Health-Related Quality of Life Through Sport

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Introduction

The role of sport in community and global health is complex and multifaceted [1-3]. Some are drawn to sport for the potential positive physical, psychological, and socio-cultural outcomes, such as lower risk of disease and improved mood [4-6]. Although sport participation provides opportunities to experience positive health effects [7], negative incidents (e.g., injury, violence, or abuse) can also occur which may be deeply distressing and long lasting [2,8,9]. Trauma or phobia (e.g., kinesiophobia, fear of reinjury or movement) could result from a single incident, ongoing events that happen over time, or varied and multiple events [8,10]. Consequently, sport is a double-edged sword, potentially resulting in good and bad outcomes [11].

Whether the negative inciting incident results as part of sport or not, sport professionals need knowledge and access to specific healthcare resources and solutions for promoting and sustaining sport participants' health-related quality of life [8,12,13]. For this reason, sport professionals may need regular healthcare informed educational training to help sport participants manage adverse experiences that have the potential to influence physical, mental, emotional, and behavioral development and future responses [2,8,14]. Protective factors (e.g., social connections and support, family and friend functioning, and resilience), especially those established during childhood and learned through extracurricular competitive activities such as sport and exercise, have been shown to positively influence physical and mental development and lead to future prosocial behaviors [15-17]. Protective responses

(e.g., resiliency and positive self-esteem) often stem from those who we value and regularly interact with socially (e.g., parents, teachers, coaches, and healthcare professionals). Therefore, an interprofessional healthcare team of specialists from various fields (iTeam) could help sport participants (athletes, coaches, spectators, etc.) develop behaviors that prevent or lessen the impact of negative incidents (e.g., injury, abuse, antisocial behaviors, and violence) [2,13,18,19].

Recognition and care are not simply issues for sport participants and lead professionals, but the community and society at large [12,20]. Building a coalition between sport organizations, local and regional healthcare agencies, and community members is necessary to promote awareness and a subculture of prioritizing health-related quality of life [1,2,8,12]. For example, the NCAA, with the support of other national organizations, issued mental health recommendations for college student-athletes [21]. Likewise, the NFL Total Wellness initiative strives to "build systems, create programs, provide resources, and encourage culture change to enhance the overall well-being of the NFL community in the areas of physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and financial health" [22]. Accordingly, it would make sense to build systems that create appropriate programs, resources, policies, and interventions at an earlier stage of life, such as during adolescence, a critical stage of development [12,23]. For instance, community youth sport systems that involve proactive communication among schools, school districts, youth sport organizations, and healthcare professionals

would likely prove beneficial in establishing and reinforcing protective factors [10,24]. Thus, an iTeam (or multidisciplinary) approach at the public policy level could facilitate collaboration among these groups and community members for sport participants' health and wellbeing throughout life.

Establishing an interprofessional healthcare team at various competition levels could help address the various physical, psychological, and socio-cultural factors associated with the double-edged phenomena in sport [2, 13]. The iTeam members (e.g., strength and conditioning coaches, sport medicine physicians, athletic trainers, physical therapists, nutritionists and dietitians, mental health specialists, and mental performance consultants) would need to trust one another enough to integrate their personal and professional competencies [2,13]. An iTeam would be beneficial to sport participants throughout their various stages of development and sport involvement [2,13,20]. It would require the professionals to gain knowledge, training, and experience of one another's expertise and specializations. This understanding and practical expertise is essential for effective and efficient communication among them and with sport participants. Furthermore, those involved would attain a holistic view of the physical, psychological, and socio-cultural factors that put sport participants at risk for experiencing stress, injury, or trauma [12,13,25]. Sport participants would become aware of iTeam members' various roles and responsibilities and may have a greater openness to various healthcare resources, training methods, and interventions. This awareness and openness may help reduce stigma about asking healthcare questions and seeking assistance [25,26]. Thus, an iTeam approach may influence individuals and groups at various levels (team, league, school, governing body, sport culture, and global community) to further prioritize sport participants health-related quality of life. As part of their Let's Move campaign [27], the International Olympic Committee and World Health Organization could recommend and support the establishment of interprofessional healthcare teams for promoting health-related quality of life through sport.

2. Acknowledgement

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3. Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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