Bringing Sport Psychology into Physiotherapy


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Bringing Sport Psychology into Physiotherapy

Dr Caroline Heaney
School of Education, Childhood, Youth & Sport
The Open University

The Study

Purpose:
- To measure the impact of an online sport psychology education module on the sport psychology related attitudes and behaviours of qualified sports physiotherapists in the UK

Previous research:
- Limited previous research directly measuring the impact of a sport psychology education intervention (e.g. Clement & Shannon, 2009; Stiller-Ostrowski et al., 2009)
- The existing research exclusively examines US athletic trainer populations (predominantly student populations)
- These studies typically have relatively short follow-up periods

Key gaps:
- UK professionals
- Those already qualified
- Longitudinal impact
- Distance learning

Method

- 95 physiotherapists working in sport
- Intervention group
  - 23 males & 21 females
  - Mean age = 33.70 years (SD = 8.16)
  - Studied an online module titled ‘Sport psychology for physiotherapists’
    - Module content (as recommended by Heaney et al., 2015):
      1. Understanding the psychological impact of injury
      2. Interventions and psychological skills/techniques
      3. Referral and professional boundaries
- Control group
  - 26 males & 25 females
  - Mean age = 36.11 years (SD = 8.78)
  - Studied an online module titled ‘Strength & conditioning for physiotherapists’
- Both modules were split into three units requiring approximately 12 hours of study spread over 3 weeks (1 unit per week)

Findings - Attitude

Hypothesis = There will be a significant difference in physiotherapists’ attitudes towards sport psychology before and after (immediately, three-months and six-months) studying a sport psychology education module
- Accepted - AAIS total scores changed significantly over time for those who studied the sport psychology module

Hypothesis = There will be a significant difference in attitudes towards sport psychology between the control group and the intervention group
- Accepted - physiotherapists in the intervention group demonstrated significantly higher attitude towards sport psychology (AAIS total) scores than physiotherapists in the control group immediately following the completion of the module
Findings - Attitude

- A 2 x 4 (group x time) ANOVA conducted on the AAIS total score data revealed:
  - No significant interaction between time and group (F(3, 91) = 1.831, p = 0.147, partial η² = 0.027)
  - No significant main effect for group (F(3, 91) = 1.009, p = 0.390, partial η² = 0.011)
  - No significant main effect for time (F(3, 91) = 1.408, p = 0.243, partial η² = 0.042)

- A 2 x 4 ANOVA conducted on the "setting" and "pain tolerance" subscales, but not on the "goal-setting" subscale, revealed no significant effect analyses.

- A 2 x 4 ANOVA conducted on the "self-talk" subscales, but not on the "goal-setting" and "pain tolerance" subscales, revealed no significant effect analyses.

Findings - Behaviour (usage)

- A 2 x 4 (group x time) ANOVA conducted on the PIUS total score data revealed:
  - No significant interaction between time and group (F(3, 91) = 0.875, p = 0.435, partial η² = 0.017)
  - No significant main effect for group (F(3, 91) = 1.239, p = 0.266, partial η² = 0.042)
  - Significant main effect for time (F(3, 91) = 12.210, p < 0.001, partial η² = 0.287)

- A 2 x 4 (group x time) ANOVA conducted on the PIUS total score data revealed:
  - No significant interaction between time and group (F(3, 91) = 2.932, p = 0.043, partial η² = 0.057)
  - Significant main effect for time (F(3, 91) = 34.193, p < 0.001, partial η² = 0.218)
  - No significant main effect for group (F(3, 91) = 0.036, p = 0.850, partial η² = 0.004)

- No significant interaction between time and group (F(3, 91) = 1.831, p = 0.243, partial η² = 0.042)
- A significant main effect for time (F(3, 91) = 48.874, p < 0.001, partial η² = 0.617)

- A 2 x 4 ANOVA conducted on the "sport psychology" subscale revealed:
  - A significant interaction between time and group (F(3, 91) = 57.80, p < 0.001, partial η² = 0.617)
  - A significant main effect for time (F(3, 91) = 4.442, p = 0.038)
  - No significant main effect for group (F(3, 91) = 0.036, p = 0.850, partial η² = 0.004)

- A 2 x 4 ANOVA conducted on the "imagery" and "self-talk" subscales revealed:
  - No significant interaction between time and group (F(3, 91) = 0.617)
  - A significant main effect for time (F(3, 91) = 34.193, p < 0.001, partial η² = 0.218)
  - No significant main effect for group (F(3, 91) = 1.009, p = 0.390, partial η² = 0.027)

Conclusions

- An online sport psychology education module can have a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of qualified physiotherapists working in sport.
- Physiotherapists can offer basic ‘frontline’ sport psychology support, supported by referral to a sport psychologist.
- Such CPD opportunities are needed to help injured athletes access the sport psychology support they need to cope with injury.
- A model of good practice in the integration of sport psychology education into physiotherapy is needed (see next slide).

Model of good practice in the delivery of sport psychology education for Sports Injury Rehabilitation Professionals (SIRPs) (Heaney et al.)

Thank you for listening...

Any questions?

Contact details
Email: carolines69735.wordpress.com
Tel: 01908-653703
Twitter: @caheaney
@OU_Sport
Blog: http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/OU-Sport/
https://carolines69735.wordpress.com/
References


