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Teaching Awareness of Ethical Governance in Sport

Topic 8

Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport

List of papers & Abstracts



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UNICEF (2010). Protecting Children from Violence in Sport. A Review with a focus on industrialized countries. Available from:

https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/violence_in_sport.pdf

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNICEF has long recognized that there is great value in children's sport and play, and has been a consistent proponent of these activities in its international development and child protection work. Health, educational achievement and social benefits are just some of the many desirable outcomes associated with organized physical activity. In line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF has also been a strong advocate of children's right to leisure and play and to have their voices heard in the planning and delivery of the sport activities in which they are involved.

During recent years, however, it has become evident that sport is not always a safe space for children, and that the same types of violence and abuse sometimes found in families and communities can also occur in sport and play programmes. Child athletes are rarely consulted about their sporting experiences, and awareness of and education on child protection issues among sport teachers, coaches and other stakeholders is too often lacking. Overall, appropriate structures and policies need to be developed for preventing, reporting and responding appropriately to violence in children's sport.

In recognition of this, the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre commissioned a review of the available empirical research and policy initiatives on this subject. The research resulted in a wealth of information, now published in this report. 'Protecting Children from Violence in Sport: A review with a focus on industrialized countries' defines the many aspects of the issue, provides examples of both good and poor practice, and makes suggestions for sport organizations to assist them in their violence prevention work. In particular, the study recommends improvements in:

- Data collection and knowledge generation about violence to children in sport
- Development of structures and systems for eliminating and preventing violence to children in sport
- Education, awareness-raising and training on this subject
- Promotion of ethical guidelines and codes of conduct as part of the prevention system.

It is anticipated that by addressing these gaps, significant improvements will be realized for the promotion and protection of the rights of children in sport.



Mountjoy M, Brackenridge C, Arrington M, et al. Br J. (2016) International Olympic Committee consensus statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 2016; 50:1019– 1029.

Consensus statement

International Olympic Committee consensus statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport

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ABSTRACT

Despite the well-recognised benefits of sport, there are also negative influences on athlete health, well-being and integrity caused by non-accidental violence through harassment and abuse. All athletes have a right to engage in 'safe sport', defined as an athletic environment that is respectful, equitable and free from all forms of non-accidental violence to athletes. Yet, these issues represent a blind spot for many sport organisations through fear of reputational damage, ignorance, silence or collusion. This consensus statement extends the 2007 IOC Consensus Statement on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport, presenting additional evidence of several other types of harassment and abuse—psychological, physical and neglect. All ages and types of athletes are susceptible to these problems but science confirms that elite, disabled, child and lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans-sexual (LGBT) athletes are at highest risk, that psychological abuse is at the core of all other forms and that athletes can also be perpetrators. Harassment and abuse arise from prejudices expressed through power differences. Perpetrators use a range of interpersonal mechanisms including contact, non-contact/verbal, cyber-based, negligence, bullying and hazing. Attention is paid to the particular risks facing child athletes, athletes with a disability and LGBT athletes. Impacts on the individual athlete and the organisation are discussed. Sport stakeholders are encouraged to consider the wider social parameters of these issues, including cultures of secrecy and deference that too often facilitate abuse, rather than focusing simply on psychopathological causes. The promotion of safe sport is an urgent task and part of the broader international imperative for good governance in sport. A systematic multiagency approach to prevention is most effective, involving athletes, entourage members, sport managers, medical and therapeutic practitioners, educators and criminal justice agencies. Structural and cultural remedies, as well as practical recommendations, are suggested for sport organisations, athletes, sports medicine and allied disciplines, sport scientists and researchers. The successful prevention and eradication of abuse and harassment against athletes rests on the effectiveness of leadership by the major international and national sport organisations.

INTRODUCTION

Sport has long been recognised as a major contributor to positive health and well-being for participants. Nonetheless, the risk of sports-related accidental injury is widely acknowledged, especially for elite athletes, resulting in the evolution of a sophisticated

research and practice community to mitigate this risk.^{1,2} Less well-recognised is the potential negative influence on athlete health and well-being if his/her integrity is challenged by non-accidental violence or maltreatment through harassment and abuse.^{3,4} All forms of harassment and abuse breach human rights and may constitute a criminal offence.^{3,5-7} Therefore, there is a legal and moral duty of care incumbent on those who organise sport, to ensure that risks of non-accidental violence are identified and mitigated.

Harms caused by harassment and abuse still represent a blind spot for many sport organisations, either through fear of reputational damage or through ignorance, silence and collusion.^{8,9} Research on abuse and harassment outside of sport suggests that sport agencies cannot be complacent about this: there is no good reason to suppose that sport is exempt from the ills of wider society.¹⁰ More difficult to assess is whether sport is either more or less prone to such problems, for example, whether sport is especially risky or, conversely, offers any special protection.¹¹ What is clear is that the risk of experiencing psychological, physical and sexual violence rises as the athlete progresses up the talent ladder and performance pathway,^{12,13} and that exposure to an abusive elite sport culture can lead to a range of mental health difficulties¹⁴ and other negative impacts (see figure 1).

The cultural context of harassment and abuse is rooted in discrimination based on power differentials across a range of social and personal factors (figure 1). It remains to be seen whether and how far the addition of a non-discrimination clause to the Olympic Charter under Principle 6 in 2015¹⁵ ameliorates these problems.

Owing to the expansion of available science in the field since 2006, the IOC convened a consensus meeting of international scientific, clinical and policy experts to review the current body of knowledge, and to provide recommendations for the prevention and management of non-accidental violence in sport. This version has been expanded beyond sexual harassment and abuse in recognition of the wider array of non-accidental violence through which athletes are maltreated, and of the additional threats and rights violations that these constitute (see box 1).^{4,15,16} In concert with the IOC's recent Youth Athlete Development work¹⁷ and with UN terminology,³ this paper adopts the term 'violence' to describe the various non-accidental harms perpetrated on athletes. This Consensus Statement is an update and extension of



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Research article

Interpersonal violence against children in sport in the Netherlands and Belgium[☆]



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ABSTRACT

The current article reports on the first large-scale prevalence study on interpersonal violence against children in sport in the Netherlands and Belgium. Using a dedicated online questionnaire, over 4,000 adults prescreened on having participated in organized sport before the age of 18 were surveyed with respect to their experiences with childhood psychological, physical, and sexual violence while playing sports. Being the first of its kind in the Netherlands and Belgium, our study has a sufficiently large sample taken from the general population, with a balanced gender ratio and wide variety in socio-demographic characteristics. The survey showed that 38% of all respondents reported experiences with psychological violence, 11% with physical violence, and 14% with sexual violence. Ethnic minority, lesbian/gay/bisexual (LGB) and disabled athletes, and those competing at the international level report significantly more experiences of interpersonal violence in sport. The results are consistent with rates obtained outside sport, underscoring the need for more research on interventions and systematic follow-ups, to minimize these negative experiences in youth sport.

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Introduction

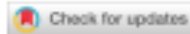
Interpersonal violence (IV) in sport is an understudied phenomenon. Indeed, it is not customary to dwell on the negative sides of sport, which is traditionally viewed as a social good. Policy makers have been more preoccupied with making sport available (the sport-for-all doctrine) and injury-free than making it safe from interpersonal violence such as

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Article

'There was something that wasn't right because that was the only place I ever got treated like that': Children and young people's experiences of emotional harm in sport

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Abstract

The article reports findings from a study of negative and harmful experiences of children participating in organised sport in the UK focusing in particular on emotional harm. A convenience sample of 6124 young people (age 18–22) completed an online survey about their experiences of sport as children (up to age 16); 89 follow-up telephone interviews were conducted. The article provides information about the emotional harm of children in sport and the context within which it occurs. It provides some evidence of a sporting culture where emotional harm is widespread at all levels of sport and commonly experienced by children of all ages.

Keywords

Children and young people, emotional abuse, emotional harm, positive sporting culture, sport

Introduction

Large numbers of children participate in sport in many different ways: as elite or club athletes, or recreationally, as helpers, ball boys and girls, mascots and spectators (SportEngland, 2005). There is a substantial body of literature in the area of children's participation in sport developed over the past 20 years which has contributed to our understanding of children's experiences of sport. The positive benefits of sport in children's lives have been extensively researched and written about and include: enhanced

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Women Athletes' Personal Responses to Sexual Harassment in Sport

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The examination of sexual harassment in sport has become an active research field within the past two decades. It is especially important for sport psychology consultants to understand this issue because they have professional opportunities to influence both individual and organizational responses to it. This article uses interview data from an investigation of sexual harassment in sport to examine the personal responses of 25 elite female athletes to their experiences of sexual harassment. The athletes reacted with disgust, fear, irritation, and anger when the sexually harassing incidents occurred. They also demonstrated individual, internally focused responses to the harassment rather than collective, externally focused ones. This suggests that sport organizations have much work to do on both education and organizational change if sexual harassment is to be challenged and eradicated. The findings also indicate that sport psychology consultants have a role to play in equipping athletes with the necessary skills to avert or confront sexual harassment in sport.

For the last twenty years sexual harassment in sport has been an increasingly important area of study (Fasting, Brackenridge, & Sundgot-Borgen, 2003, 2004; Toftegaard Nielsen, 2001; Volkwein, Schnell, Sherwood, & Livezey, 1997) following wider research into sexual harassment in society more generally (Gutek, 1985; O'Donohue, 1997; Stockdale, 1996). Internationally, almost all of this wider research has occurred in the workplace and in the educational system, but little is known about the causes and characteristics of sexual harassment in sport. Further, although sport psychology consultants often have privileged access to both athletes and coaches, we have virtually no knowledge of how they can contribute effectively to harassment-free sport.

Sexual harassment is variously defined and not always co-terminus with illegal behavior. In the United States two types are classified: (a) quid pro quo, and (b) hostile environment.

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Article



Sexual harassment in sport toward females in three European countries

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Abstract

This article presents data from a cross-cultural study titled 'Gender Relations in Sport – The Experiences of Czech, Greek, and Norwegian Female Sport Students'. The main research question asked is: what are the amounts and the forms of male and female sexual harassment experienced in a sport setting by female sport students in Czech Republic, Greece, and Norway? Women ($N = 616$) who were studying in sport departments of academic institutions in the three countries participated in the study. The results show that 34 percent of the students had experienced sexually harassing behavior from a man and 12 percent from a woman. Experiences of sexually harassing behaviors from both men and women were reported more often in the Czech Republic and Greece than in Norway. The form of sexual harassment the participants reported experiencing the most was 'repeated unwanted sexual glances, etc.' (22%). The difference between female and male harassment is discussed in relation to patriarchal power. The overall differences between countries are discussed in relation to the three countries' gender orders, gender equality laws as well as the anti-sexual harassment laws inside and outside sport organizations.

Keywords

cross-cultural study, Europe, sexual harassment, sport, women students

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International Olympic Committee (2016). Safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport. Available from https://d2g8uwgn11fzgj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/18105952/IOC_Safeguarding_Toolkit_ENG_Screen_Full1.pdf

Introduction

The International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s mission is to place athletes at the heart of the Olympic Movement, and **Olympic Agenda 2020** sets out the strategic roadmap for this. This includes Recommendation 18: Strengthen support to athletes. Through this recommendation, the IOC has taken significant steps to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse in sport.

The IOC prevention of harassment and abuse in sport (PHAS) initiatives have been established by the IOC's Athletes', Athletes' Entourage, Medical and Scientific and Women in Sport Commissions, in collaboration with NOCs, IFs and subject matter experts.

Furthermore, the need for the development of resources related to athlete safeguarding was further requested by athletes at the **International Athletes' Forum in 2015**.

The IOC PHAS initiatives include:

The Games-time Framework:

- The *"IOC Framework for safeguarding athletes and other participants from harassment and abuse in sport (Games-time period)"* (hereafter the "Games-time Framework") is in place at all editions of the Olympic Games.
- It establishes the reporting mechanisms and case management procedure for any incidents of harassment and abuse during the Games.
- Crucial to the Games-time Framework is the presence of the IOC Safeguarding Officer.

The IOC Guidelines for IFs and NOCs:

- The *"IOC Guidelines for IFs and NOCs related to creating and implementing a policy to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse in sport"* (hereafter the "IOC Guidelines") were approved by the IOC Executive Board in July 2016.

- These Guidelines detail what the IOC considers to be the minimum requirements for athlete-safeguarding policies.
- This toolkit aims to contextualise the information found in the IOC Guidelines, by providing a step-by-step approach to developing PHAS policies and procedures. It is also intended to offer potential solutions to common challenges which may occur when developing such policies.

These, as well as the other IOC PHAS initiative tools, are discussed in further detail in this toolkit.

Terminology check:

What do we mean by the terms "policies" and "procedures" in this context?

Policies: The outlining of your organisation's principles and approach to safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport.

Procedures: The detailing of the series of specific steps or actions which should be followed to achieve the objective of your policy, i.e. safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport.