

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the purpose of this research?

- Investigate the interplay between mental health, mental performance, sport culture, and athletic performance in high-performance sport.

Who is conducting this research?

- Principal investigator Dr. Natalie Durand-Bush from the Canadian Centre for Mental Health and Sport (<https://www.ccmhs-ccsms.ca/>) and uOttawa SEWP Lab (<https://www.sewplab.com/>), and collaborators Krista Van Slingerland and Connor Primeau (uOttawa), and Dr. Michelle Dionne and Rachel Jewett (uRyerson).

Is this research funded?

- Yes, by Own the Podium and MITACS.

Why is this research important?

- Mental health is a vital asset that influences our daily functioning and performance.
- Research on the mental health of athletes across the Olympic/Paralympic quadrennium is scarce worldwide and we do not currently have foundational data on Canadian high-performance athletes.

What are the anticipated benefits/outcomes of this research?

- Inform the mental health strategy for high-performance sport in Canada that is currently being developed by Canadian sport leaders.
- Understand how mental health can help athletes peak perform and reach the podium.
- Develop policies, resources, and educational programs that will safeguard athletes' mental health and performance.
- Determine how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted athletes' mental health and goals to reach the podium.

Why are data collected at multiple time points?

- Mental health fluctuates over time and may decline under long periods of excessive demands and stress and a lack of resources; as such, it is essential to track mental health over an extended period of time to fully understand its impact and be able to periodize support.

Why are several variables included in the research?

- Mental health is affected by several factors. For example, mental performance and sport culture may serve as protective factors in the achievement and maintenance of positive mental health; consequently, it is important to track such indices, which could help shape future educational programs and resources.

Will athletes be interested in this research?

- Yes, indeed. Research suggests that high-performance athletes want to be able to talk about mental health and get support from their coaches, support staff, and organization: *"My relationship with my coach now is way more open and honest and I don't feel required to make something up when my mental health is interfering with my ability to train and perform. Having a coach who can understand that and give you the idea to look for resources makes a big difference"*.

Are there risks from participating in this research?

- The risks are minimal. However, if athletes require support as a result of completing the survey or partaking in the interview, they will be advised to reach out to their MPC or a mental health practitioner through Game Plan, Morneau Shepell, the CCMHS, or additional mental health resources provided to them.
- Athletes will have a flexible period to complete the survey at each time point (10 weeks) and partake in the interview if they are selected (12 weeks). All information will be kept **anonymous** and **confidential**.



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