



Title of Project: An exploration of addictive and compulsive behaviour in athletes.

Participant Information Sheet

Background

Addictive and/or compulsive behaviours such as alcoholism, gambling, disordered eating, drug use and excessive exercise among others are prevalent within athlete populations and constitute a risk of harm, but limited research on addiction in sports contexts means that athlete-specific risk factors are not well understood. Previous research has identified some factors that influence addictive behaviour, including perceived acceptability of the behaviour, performance pressures and retirement. However, the mechanisms by which these factors guide behaviour have not yet been fully explored.

What is the purpose of the study?

- To explore athletes' experience of addictive and/or compulsive behavior.
- To better understand risk factors that contribute to addictive and/or compulsive behaviours in athletes.
- To better understand protective factors that prevent engagement in addictive and/or compulsive behaviours and promote recovery.

Participant selection criteria

You are eligible to take part in the study if you currently, or have previously, engaged in competitive sport at an elite/sub-elite level or above and have experienced addictive or compulsive behaviour. For the purpose of this study your behaviour/previous behaviour must be consistent with all of the following criteria:

1. Repeatedly engaging in a behaviour despite attempts to stop.
2. The behaviour poses a risk of unintended harm.
3. Feeling a sense of reward or relief upon completion of the behaviour.
4. The behaviour causes difficulties in other areas of life (e.g. physical/mental health, employment, relationships).
5. Abstinence from the behaviour causes emotional, psychological or physical discomfort.
6. Preoccupation, cravings and determination to engage in the behaviour.

What will my participation involve?

If you agree to participate in the study you will be invited to take part in a number of life history interviews to discuss your experiences of sport and addiction. The interviews will take place face-to-face or over the phone and will be audio recorded. Questions will concern your early childhood experiences, personal experiences of competitive sport environments, and

your experiences of addictive and/or compulsive behaviour, and recovery and current life experiences.

It is a requirement that participants taking part in the study will not attend interviews under the influence of intoxicating substances.

Are there any risks?

The project is unlikely to cause any significant risks but discussing the impact of addictive and compulsive behaviours, and associated triggers and consequences, may be potentially distressing. If you are currently experiencing any problems with your mental health or wellbeing please discuss these with the researcher prior to taking part in the study. As the lead researcher I am trained in counselling skills, have worked as a health professional within NHS addiction services, and have experience of conducting research interviews relating to sensitive, health related topics. Foreseeable risks have been considered and steps have been taken to mitigate these. Please contact the lead researcher on siedwards@cardiffmet.ac.uk for more details. Should you feel the need for additional support at any point the lead researcher will be able to signpost appropriate support services.

Are there any benefits from taking part?

Sharing your experiences of addictive and/or compulsive behaviours will contribute to the advancement of sport and addiction literature which has the potential to impact future practice and policies aimed at ensuring athlete welfare. This is an opportunity for you to shape the future support provided to athletes with addiction based on your own personal experiences.

What happens to the results?

The interviews will be transcribed by the lead researcher and be identifiable by participant number only to ensure that your identity is protected and remains anonymous. Research data will be disseminated through conference presentations and publication in academic journals, and will be submitted as a PhD thesis. No description that would identify individuals will be included in disseminated materials. You will have an opportunity to check whether your identity has been suitably disguised prior to dissemination.

How we protect your privacy:

Careful steps have been taken to make sure that you cannot be identified from any of the information that we have about you. All information you provide will be anonymous and managed in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-protection-act-2018>). Your own personal responses will be kept anonymous and identifiable information will be removed. Data will be stored in a password protected electronic format and collated to provide overall findings for the study and nothing will be reported which could reveal your personal responses. Information relating to the study will be securely stored for 10 years in accordance with Cardiff Metropolitan University's ethics guidelines. You will be able to access, edit and/or remove your data from the project at any time during the data collection period. You will be

emailed two weeks prior to the end of the data collection period. After data has been analysed and the results of the study are produced, we cannot change the results, but we are able to remove your personal data from the data we store for a ten- year period if you wish us to. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible. If you decide to withdraw from the study please do so by emailing the attached withdrawal form to Sian Edwards at siedwards@cardiffmet.ac.uk.

What if I want to withdraw?

If you decide you would like to withdraw during the interview process you can ask the researcher to end the interview and delete the audio recording. If you decide to withdraw from the study at a later point in time please do so by completing the attached withdrawal form and emailing it to Sian Edwards at siedwards@cardiffmet.ac.uk.

Who is involved in the study?

The research team is made up of four individuals: Miss Sian Edwards (Lead researcher; Cardiff Metropolitan University), Professor Carwyn Jones (Cardiff Metropolitan University), Dr Camilla Knight (Swansea University), and Dr Harry Bowles (Cardiff Metropolitan University). Contact details are available via university websites.

Who to contact for questions and/or concerns?

Sian Edwards - siedwards@cardiffmet.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact Susie Powell, Research and Enterprise Officer for the project - spowell@cardiffmet.ac.uk



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Participant withdrawal form

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I, _____ would like to withdraw my personal information from the above study.

Ending my participation means:

- I will no longer be contacted about this research study unless I need to be notified of a safety concern.
- Information about me will no longer be collected.
- All personal data will be removed from data stores.
- If withdrawing prior to data analysis all recorded and transcribed interview data will be deleted.

I understand that after the point of data analysis any data collected as part of my participation in the study will remain as part of the study records and cannot be discarded, but all personal information will be removed.

Signature of Participant

Date