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REVIEW

Association between injury and quality of life in athletes: A systematic review, 1980–2013



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Abstract Despite the benefits of participation in sports, it also entails a risk situation for the occurrence of injuries at any level of performance. These injuries can affect both physical and psychological aspects, and consequently, generate a significant decline in performance and/or lack of participation, which may affect their quality of life. The present study aims to systematically review information regarding the association of injury with domains of quality of life (QoL) in adult athletes and to identify the most commonly used instruments for the measurement of injury and QoL in adult athletes published between 1980 and 2013. Searches were performed using five databases (MEDLINE/PubMed, Web of Science, SPORTDiscus, PsycINFO and LILACS) and the references cited in retrieved articles. From the search, only 12 articles met the inclusion criteria and were retrieved and examined. Different questionnaires without standardization are used to assess the injury of athletes. For the assessment of QoL, most studies used the SF-36. The evaluation of the direction of the association between injury and domains of QoL demonstrated that most studies included in this review showed high percentages of negative association in the *life satisfaction* domain (100%), followed by *bodily pain* (71.4%), *physical component score* (75%), *physical functioning*, *physical*, *vitality*, *social functioning* (66.7% each), *mental health* (62.5%), and *general health* domains (57.1%). In conclusion, in adult athletes, most studies demonstrated a negative association between injury and QoL domains, especially in the physical and social aspects. However, the association between injury and QoL domains needs further investigation.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

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Asociación entre lesión y calidad de vida en los atletas: Una revisión sistemática, 1980-2013

Resumen A pesar de los beneficios de participar en la vida deportiva, ello entraña una situación de riesgo debido a la ocurrencia de lesiones a cualquier nivel de desempeño. Dichas lesiones pueden afectar tanto a los aspectos físicos como psicológicos, y generar por tanto un descenso significativo del desempeño y/o una falta de participación, lo que puede afectar a su vez a la calidad de vida. El presente estudio trata de revisar sistemáticamente la información relativa a la asociación entre las lesiones y los ámbitos de la calidad de vida en atletas adultos, así como identificar los instrumentos más comúnmente utilizados en la medición de las lesiones y la calidad de vida en dichos atletas, en artículos publicados entre 1980 y 2013. Las búsquedas se realizaron utilizando cinco bases de datos (MEDLINE/PubMed, Web of Science, SPORTDiscus, PsycINFO y LILACS) y las referencias citadas en artículos recuperados. De entre la búsqueda realizada, sólo 12 artículos cumplieron los criterios de inclusión, y fueron recuperados y examinados. Se han utilizado diferentes cuestionarios no estandarizados para evaluar las lesiones de los atletas. Para evaluar la calidad de vida, muchos estudios utilizaron el SF-36. La evaluación de la dirección de la asociación entre lesión y ámbitos de la calidad de vida demostró que muchos estudios incluidos en esta revisión reflejaron elevados porcentajes de asociación negativa en el ámbito de la satisfacción de vida (100%), seguido de los ámbitos de dolor corporal (71,4%), puntuación de componentes físicos (75%), funcionamiento físico, vitalidad física, funcionamiento social (66,7% cada uno), salud mental (62,5%), y salud general (57,1%). En conclusión, en atletas adultos, muchos estudios demostraron una asociación negativa entre lesiones y ámbitos de la calidad de vida, especialmente en los aspectos físicos y sociales. Sin embargo, la asociación entre lesión y ámbitos de la calidad de vida precisa una investigación adicional.

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Introduction

Sports practice is widespread all over the world,¹ demonstrating a strong positive influence in health for practitioners related to physical aspects; e.g., cardiorespiratory improvements²⁻⁶ and psychological aspects, e.g., stress and anxiety reduction.^{7,8} Despite these benefits, participation in sports also entails a risk situation for the occurrence of injuries at any level of performance.^{6,9,10} This framework has been shown to be more exacerbated in athletes, as well as those who exhaustively exercise,⁹ as there is greater exposure to extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Among the extrinsic factors, the training characteristics and the type of the activity are highlighted; the intrinsic factors are associated with the biological (e.g. sex, age), biomechanical (e.g. flexibility and muscle strength) and psychosocial characteristics (e.g. motivation and experience).^{11,12}

Participation in sports between athletes involves an elevated physical requirement that can provoke an organic adjustment process that can have a negative effect on body with a high potential for imbalance in muscle and bone structures resulting in injuries.¹³ These injuries can affect both physical and psychological aspects, and consequently, generate a significant decline in performance and/or lack of participation which may affect their quality of life.

Quality of life (QoL) is defined as an individual's perception of his or her position in life in the sociocultural context and in relation to his or her goals, expectations, standards and concerns.¹⁴ This concept is multidimensional that allows

for the analysis of several dimensions^{15,16} which in turn, can also be referred to as general QoL or health related quality of life (HRQoL). The QoL concept is based on the definition that encompasses a sense of well-being and happiness, without reference to health problems or disorders. On the other hand, HRQoL is part of a multidimensional approach that considers physical, mental and social-related symptoms, as well as limitations that are caused by illness.¹⁷

Evidence supports the association between injury and QoL in athletes, however this relation is not fully established yet.^{1,18} Other studies have been done specifically with QoL in older adults,^{19,20} or in non-athletes^{21,22} and without evaluating the relation to injuries. Furthermore, other studies investigated only the instruments used to evaluate the injury and QoL, which is their validity and reliability without evaluating the association between the variables.²³⁻²⁵

Such evidence will provide an overview of the influence of the injury in the different domains of QoL in athletes, and will also identify gaps in the literature for the development of new research, as well direction and planning for injury prevention and rehabilitation allowing for a faster return with major quality and minor residual injury effects for this population, prioritizing a healthy return to sports. With these facts in mind, the present study aims to systematically review information regarding the association of injury with domains of QoL in adult athletes and to identify the most commonly used instruments for the measurement of injury and QoL in adult athletes published between 1980 and 2013.

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