

**Psychosocial factors involved in injuries sustained in
long-distance running**

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore the psychosocial factors involved in the susceptibility, experience and rehabilitation of injuries sustained in long-distance running in order to develop a biopsychosocial theoretical model that will help explain the experience of injury and the successful rehabilitation thereof in long-distance running. The study was approached from a biopsychosocial theoretical perspective. A mixed methods research design with the purpose of expansion and using 15 case studies was employed. Purposive sampling with a snowballing effect was used to select the 15 long-distance runners who were injured or had recently recovered from injury. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants. Furthermore, each participant completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

An examination of the participants' experiences of injury reveals that injury has an effect on and is affected by the following factors: running history and training program; perceived benefits and disadvantages of running; personal understanding of injury; personality factors; psychological responses to injury; perceived causes of injury; approach to rehabilitation; and coping mechanisms. Furthermore, there is an inherent interplay of biological or physical, psychological and social processes involved in the experience of injuries sustained in long-distance running.

Based on the findings of the study, the biopsychosocial model of long-distance running injuries is proposed. Although the model emanates from the experiences of the 15 participants in the study, it may be applied to long-distance runners in general. A long-distance runner's experience of running is the core of the model. The model depicts how each of the factors noted previously has an effect on and is affected by injury; thus, showing the integral relationship between injury and each of the factors. Furthermore, the biopsychosocial nature of the model is also portrayed in the model. Cognizance is also taken that all long-distance runners are individuals and may respond to injury in a unique manner.

Key Terms

- Long-distance running
- Injury
- Biopsychosocial
- Training programs
- Perceived benefits of running
- Personal understanding of injury
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- Psychological responses to injury
- Perceived causes of injury
- Approach to rehabilitation