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Dissertation title:	**LOSS OF IDENTITY AND BODY-MIND UNITY IN A FEMALE ATHLETE WHEN EXPERIENCING A LONG-TERM ILLNESS**
Supervisor:	Carly Stewart

Comments	Section
	Title and Abstract (5%) Title to include: A concise indication of the research question/problem. Abstract to include: A concise summary of the empirical study undertaken.
	Introduction and literature review (25%) To include: outline of context (theoretical/conceptual/applied) for the question; analysis of findings of previous related research including gaps in the literature and relevant contributions; logical flow to, and clear presentation of the research problem/ question; an indication of any research expectations, (i.e., hypotheses if applicable).
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LOSS OF IDENTITY AND BODY-MIND UNITY IN A FEMALE ATHLETE WHEN EXPERIENCING A LONG-TERM ILLNESS

(Dissertation submitted under the Sociology area)

Connor Nicholls

ST20020068

LOSS OF IDENTITY AND BODY-MIND UNITY IN A FEMALE ATHLETE WHEN EXPERIENCING A LONG-TERM ILLNESS

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ABSTRACT

This sociological study explores the experiences of an individual suffering from illness in sport. Identifying the effects this has on mind-body relationship and identity. Through the method of an ethnographic case study, the research aims to present the experiences of a female athlete and explores her constant mind- body struggle and efforts to hold onto past selves. This study provides a scope for healthcare professionals and coaches to develop aftercare for athletes that have experienced an injury or illness. Research into athletic embodiment and identity phenomenon in illness is limited (Sparkes 2004 and Stewart, Sparkes and Smith 2011). This study aims to address the current lack of literature regarding illness in sport, providing an opportunity for future research to be considered.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Athletes who are involved in sport are usually vulnerable to injury or illness. The effects of illness have been noted to challenge the physical, mental and social welling of an athlete (Stewart, Sparkes and Smith 2011). Pullen (2013) states that the majority of research 'focuses on the consequences of physical disability on identity and body-self relationships' (pp. 49) that may occur through an injury or illness in sport. (Sparkes and Smith 2002, Sparkes 1998, Stewart, Sparkes and Smith 2011).

Once an individual becomes involved in a sporting culture they begin to construct an identity. When an individual believes they are an athlete, this is considered an athletic identity. The strength of an individual's athletic identity can change depending on the athlete's commitment to the sport (Brewer 1993). A mind-body unity is essential to sporting performance, as an athlete should be able to unconsciously perform specific tasks. This is developed with practice and may become very strong when an athlete reaches elite level, as an individual should be able to perform tasks fluently without thought. However when this mind and body unity is disrupted it can cause identity dilemmas.

With this in mind this study aims to address the lack of research in the phenomenon of illness. Alongside this there appears to be a gender bias in this phenomenon towards men. This research aims to explore a female athletes true account of her own experiences with an illness. Importantly the research will focus on the problems in restoring past self/or identity and the effects of a fractured mind-body unity.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW

The definition of Identity, according to Parker and Harris (2009) changes from author to author, however one key assertion remains prevalent, that identity is never fixed or static. The idea of ever changing identity is evident when audiences are present (peers, family, teachers or work colleagues), Jenkins (2008) supports this, stating that we are different things to different people, simply meaning that one can change identity depending on one's environment. Both authors believe that sport is an environment for construction of identity. Individuals can share communality with one another and then be distinguished from others, thus forming an identity, for example an athlete shares a common ground with another athlete undertaking the same event however both athletes could have completely different occupations. Parker and Harris (2009) support this view by stating that identity is inextricably bound up in the parallels and disparities with other people and groups.

Jenkins (2008) describes identity as:

> 'The ways in which individuals and collectives are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectives and as the systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectives, and between individuals and collectives, of relationships of similarity and difference. (pp.3)' Collective identities and individual identities can be broad in range, for example, nationality, gender or sporting/athletic.

Lally (2007) defines identity as a multidimensional view of a single person, which can be altered by environmental and social factors. One's identity can have numerous dimensions however one dimension will be preferred and dominate. This one dominant dimension encompasses the identity of a person. Once a strong identity/ dimension has formed then one can begin to tell stories created and constructed through experiences (Tsang 2000). These experiences are clarified and justified through story telling. These stories of identity can change in context as the individual is interacting with different people for example peers or family, and at different times. Tsang (2000) states that identity is always in a process of being changed or re- created, a transition process.

Goffman (1969) suggests that there are three forms of identity, personal, ego and social. He defines personal identity as being unique to a person, citing a person's biography.

Social identity is described as relationship to other people in terms of age, gender and class etc. Ego identity is defined by Goffman (1969) as a *'subjective sense of who we are and how we exist in the world, in other words how we feel about our self' (pp. 28-40*. The use of subjective in this definition suggests that one's ego may change within the situation or environment.

Social classification allows one to define someone within a social environment, Mael and Ashforth, (1989) state that *'a woman could define herself in terms of groups with which she classifies herself in (I am Canadian and I am a woman) (pp. 21)'.* In this example she will see herself as a member of both groups.

With group identification Mael, et al, 1989 recognises four key principles, firstly a cognitive construct that involves being psychologically connected with the fate of the group. Secondly, one will have to experience the pits and falls of the group. Thirdly, one will have to act with and support the certain values or attitudes associated with the group. Finally, one will '*define themselves in terms of a social referent'* (pp. 22). These principles show what a person has to commit to in order to become part of an effective social group.

Self-identity

Woodward (1997) states that self-identity can be one of national identity in which you are placed from birth. This automatically means that you are distinguished from others. Woodward (1997) asserts that difference is supported by exclusion. She further talks about this notion of social exclusion stating that there are classificatory systems, providing a principle of difference to a population. This creates opposing groups, difference separates one identity from another to form 'us' and 'them' mentality. This is apparent in sport when rivals are formed between clubs, particularly prevalent in English soccer. This rivalry means an individual can only support one team and must exclude the other club.

Swann and Bosson, (2010), give a psychological perspective on the term self by describing it as a *'set of beliefs, evaluations, perceptions and thoughts that people have about themselves' (pp. 591).* They further state that *'self refers to a representation or set of representations about oneself' (pp. 591).*

Multiple identities

A person can hold more than one identity, relating to a position or role that they hold in society (Stetes and Burke 2003). Thus, a person can be a professional rugby player in one identity and a father in another. The person then may choose to act differently within each role, when in a fathering role they may adopt paternalistic characteristics however in their athlete role they may become aggressive and competitive. People move between these different identities with ease (Stetes and Burke 2003).

Huang and Britton support this citing an example of a woman as wife, sportswoman and teacher Hargreaves (2007) reinforces this notion stating that identities are fluid and affected by social, political and cultural environments. (Huang and Britton, 2006) (Hargreaves, J. 2000).

Some women struggle to maintain one identity in sport. Huang and Britton (2006) study illustrates the challenge women face. Once women have completed a sporting event portraying them as strong, muscular or aggressive, they feel they have to display a typical 'feminine' side to their identity to conform to the social norm of hegemonic femininity. This is supported in the study when a female power lifter talks about performing well then dressing in an overtly feminine style afterwards. Paradis (2012) acknowledges the struggle women face in a sporting setting, describing how an athletic and muscular female power lifter felt out of place in the social context. An individual can have many identities when trying to adhere to cultural/ social norms.

Athletic identity

Athletic identity is created through playing, socialising and interacting in sport. Sparkes, and Smith (1999) suggest that once an athletic identity is formed this is located at the top of identity hierarchy. This supports the notion that athletic identity has a stronger connection to a person than other social identities. Hawkins, Coffee and Soundy (2013), conducted a study looking at the effects on athletic identity when an athlete experiences a

major injury or trauma. They state in their introduction that athletic identity is at the *'apex'* of ones identity hierarchy. The results of this study suggest that athletic identity stayed strong and prevalent.

On the subject of athletic identity many authors adopt Brewer's (1993) definition '*The extent to which an individual relates to the role of an athlete' (pp. 237-254).* This use of the word' extent' in this definition suggests that there can be a strong or weak athletic identity. This idea is advanced by Túlia, Cabrita, Boleto, Leite, Serpa and Paulo (2014) who state that athletic identity can hold much importance depending on the role one has in sport as a dedicated athlete.

As one's role in sport can become ever-consuming then athletic identity strengthens and may limit career choices to a sporting environment. This is supported by Mitchell, Nesti, Richardson, Midgley, Eubank, and Littlewood, (2014) when one places an importance on athletic identity that individual becomes one dimensional, seeing themself as an athlete potentially at the cost of other identities. Athletic identity can become too strong when from a young age, children are exposed to increasingly high amounts of competition and training. Martin and Horn (2013) assert that individuals with a strong athletic identity are constantly assessing achievement in a sporting realm. This in conjunction with a heavy training schedule as Martin and Horn (2013) suggest can lead to early athlete burnout and have negative effects on one's social, mental and physiological well- being.

Horton and Mack, (2000) indicate that there are potential risks connected to having a strong athletic identity. These risks surface when one has become an athlete at the cost of other identities or areas of life. They suggest that over commitment to being an athlete may lead to negative practices such as overload in training, unease when not capable to train and the use of performance enhancing drugs. Over commitment may lead to the inability to form multiple identities, becoming stuck within the athletic identity. This can create situations of depression, social isolation and poor emotional health once the athletic identity is lost. Green and Weinberg (2001) support this by stating when one's life is solely sport related and that athlete becomes injured or ill this may threaten one's identity leading to psychological disruption. This is further supported by authors (Mitchell, Nesti, Richardson, Midgley, Eubank and Littlewood, (2014), Sparkes and Smith,(1999)).

Brewer (1993) conducted two studies, illustrating a positive correlation between high levels of athletic identity and depression following injury. Green and Weinberg (2001) support this by stating that the results of the four studies they examined all had a positive correlation as well, confirming their hypothesis. Brewer (1993) however found positives to having a strong athletic identity, including *'development of self -identity and positive effect on performance' (pp. 237-254).* However these two studies measured athletic identity using a quantitate methods potentially problematic as athletic identity can change from person to person. To turn this complex term into numbers to form a positive correlation is a difficult task and contested by other researchers (Stewart, Sparkes and Smith 2011).

Injury or illness

The condition of illness has been under -researched in theoretical studies compared to injury. Even so injury as a study was ignored until the 1980s Stewart, Sparkes and Smith (2011) point out the expansion of this research has been rapid, with studies focusing on experience, coping and recovery from injury. More is now understood about this phenomenon. As noted by Stewart et al (2011) athlete's experiences with illness are less documented and understood. They assert that many similarities can be found between sport injury and illness, Stewart et al (2011) suggests that like injury, illness may be viewed as a stressful event challenging the athletes, physical emotional and social well-being in relation to major threats to their core identities and sense of self.

Despite these similarities it is important not to assume that the experiences of injury and illness are the same. Injury can be noted as a failure of the body's construction. Whereas illness can be noted by Thomas (2004) as deficiency that could be life long, this impairment can be physical or mental and considered a chronic illness. This chronic illness has been linked with loss of self in much of Charmaz's work (1983,1987,1991, 1994, 1995). Sparkes (1998) notes chronic illness can threaten self and will disrupt a sense of mind and body unity. This demise of mind and body unity can affect a person's daily life according to Saprkes (1998).

Body

Bodies are central to sport through their maintenance, practices, measurements, successes and failures. Woodward, states that body is crucial to identity. Bodies are not

just biologically constructed but can be shaped through social experiences. Examples of social shaping include interactions with other athletes, coaches or peers (Sparkes 1998). The body, according to Shilling, can be changed. The body should not be considered a limitation or constraint to a persons' identity. He makes the point that the body and identity are inextricably linked and therefore the body cannot change without affecting the one's identity.

Science has had a great impact on how this body can be changed to suit a person's identity; the ability to alter the body with the use of plastic surgery, for example, men having chest implants for a more muscular appearance (Shilling 2003). Shilling (2003) states people have shaped their own bodies for years with the use of ritualistic body markings. He also asserts, that for many people the body can become a project with the shaping of body size, form and content.

Being an athlete can lead to a well- conditioned body. When this body becomes well-conditioned one should be able to perform tasks without any thought which Sparkes (1998) calls a 'primary immediacy' (pp. 652). Once an athlete has achieved this they feel a sense of mind and body working in unity. This sense of mind and body unity is evident in athletes in studies conducted by (Sparkes 1998, Pullen and Stewart 2014, Stewart, Smith and Sparkes 2011) suggesting that this mindless state of mind and body unity is essential to athletic performance. Conversely in these studies this sense of unconscious effort of mind and body is lost following a traumatic event (injury or illness)

Disrupted identity

Body can threaten one's identity, Sparkes, (1999) reading 'Talking bodies' graphically illustrates this giving a clear insight into how identity can be lost through body. It suggests that men define themselves with the use of their body and that this is how they are defined by others. The weakening or loss of this body threatens the core values of masculinity such as strength and muscularity. Furthermore in reference to sport once these core values have been lost it is hard to regain them amongst friends and teammates.

This leaves men open to feeling extremely vulnerable and fragile. Sparkes, (1999, Talking Bodies, pp. 51-74) describes innate feeling of fragileness when walking around university after sustaining a lower back injury. Furthermore Sparkes, continues to question his own

masculinity when a colleague calls him 'fucked', suggesting he has lost his masculine features, which he feels diminishes him to 'fucker'. He feels let down by his body as it is exhibiting feminine traits such as weakness and dependency, which he has always worked hard to avoid.

Sparkes, describes his body as a failed one leading to his assertion that he had a Fatal Flaw, which forced him to stop playing sport. Sparkes, talk of suffering bouts of depression that led him to be medicated and regular trips to the hospital. This clearly illustrates the direct connection between loss of the athletes body identity and the threat to ones emotional and physical well- being.

Once an athlete has experienced a failed body, attempts are made to try to regain previous bodies or identities. Sparkes, returns to the gym after a lengthy spell off with his fatal flaw and tries to regain his lost sense of body. He writes about doing the fitness tests at the gym, aware they are inaccurate due to his physiological background .He completes these tests just to have some confirmation that he is still his former self.

Stewart, Smith and Sparkes (2011) suggest that metaphors in sport highlight the masculinity and hegemonic masculinity ideals. The first metaphor is *'sport is a fight or war'* (pp. 587) usually used to describe contact sports such as rugby and American football, however this has been used in less physical sports such as golf describing clubs as weapons and holes as targets .The *'people are animals'* and *athletes are machines'* (pp. 587) metaphors are commonplace They assert that these type of metaphors continue to be employed when an athlete becomes ill or injured, for example the fight metaphor is used to battle the illness and regain health, suggesting that athletes still rely on masculine characteristics to *cope* with the changed situation.

Femininity

There is a distinct gender bias when it comes to research into this phenomenon, noted by Stewart and Pullen (2014). They state that there is relatively no research conducted on female athletes especially in track and field events. They suggest that with the emerging athletic female becoming more prevalent it is important to study this. There is a growing interest from women becoming athletic or attaining athletic bodies.

Schippers, Stewart, Smith, Sparkes and Woodward (2007, 2011 and 1997), describe femininity as being subordinated in relation to masculinity. She goes describes the social norms or symbolic meaning of being a man or a woman, men as strong and assertive, women are weak and vulnerable. She also describes qualities attached to feminity as inferior, such as the inability to use violence effectively. Krane, (2001) supports this describing characteristics of hegemonic femininity as being gentle, emotional, passive and maternal. On the other hand characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are strong, self-assured and self-determining.

Cultural norms Krane (2001) asserts is that athleticism and femininity are complete opposites and that within sport women must learn to balance athleticism with a feminine appearance, restricting women in sport. Partaking in a perceived masculine sport, they feel they must counteract this with a more feminine appearance. This is further supported in Krane's (2001) work by stating when female basketball players finished performing they would then dress in sexy evening wear.

Femininity is also linked to body with the feminine body having cultural ideals, which according to Woodward, (1997) is small and slender. When female athletes have a muscular appearance for example body builder this female body is seen out of the norm and odd. This is evidenced in a study conducted by McGrath and Chananie-Hill (2009), who looked at the life of ten college female bodybuilders. This study showed that women knew they were strange and that men may not want to be seen around them. McGrath and Chanaine-Hill (2009) note not many people want to be associated with a masculine woman. This is supported in Woodward's, (1997) article about Reebok refusing to sponsor a female bodybuilding event, as they did not want to support or be associated with the appearance of the athletes.

Narrative

In the studies of illness and disability, narrative research has become current as this allows reflection upon an individual's experiences through the use of stories and narratives. This is evident in research conducted by Smith and Sparkes, (2005) considering the experiences of male rugby players who have suffered a Spinal cord injury. The athletes would try to reconstruct damaged identity through creating narratives and stories.

Once an illness or disability has affected an individual, one will begin to tell stories and give a perspective on the effects of that illness to self-identity. Franks, (1995) presents three main narratives that are used when one is telling stories about suffering an illness. The restitution narrative, chaos narrative and the quest narrative, these narratives mean one can attempt to reconstruct self-identity or self-narrative triggered by an illness. The restitution narrative is defined by Franks, (1995) *'yesterday I was healthy, today I am sick but tomorrow I will be healthy again' (pp. 75-97)*. Chaos narrative is usually used when one has a physical disability, Pullen (2013), describes this narrative as *'lack of control and anxiety feeds the abstract stories that constitute this form of narrative which are often too disruptive and fragmented to be voiced' (pp. 52)*. The quest narrative is used when one has an acknowledgement the illness and begins to tell stories of hope. Sparkes, (1998), states that when an individual has a chronic illness the restitution narrative is the main narrative used.

Rationale for study

After reviewing the literature there is a lack of research into female athletic identity with the majority of the studies looking into male experiences. This study is therefore concerned with addressing the current gender bias, by examining how women in sport experience loss of identity with a long-term illness.

Many researchers have conducted studies on male experiences in sport and suggested there is a need to explore the experiences of female athletes (Sparkes and Silvennoinen 1999, Young and White 1999, Mitchell, Nesti, Richardson, Midgley, Eubank and Littlewood, 2014). Charlesworth (2004) identified that studies have looked at male experiences in sport, which are then closely focused on masculinity and the male athlete body. She goes on to add that studies thus far have overlooked the female experiences around pain or injury. Sparkes (1998) was one of the first authors to look in detail at female's experiences of injury and links to loss of identity and embodiment. However as stated earlier this should not be considered to be the same as illness Stewart et al (2011).

This study aims to unpick the importance of athletic identity and mind-body relationship demonstrating how illnesses in sport can constrain an athlete's identity and mind body unity. This research will utilise and draw upon similar ideas, used by Sparkes in

deconstructing experiences told by the participant. This study will use a qualitative method in exploring the experiences of the participant in much the same way as Sparkes

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This paper seeks to explore and understand the athletic identity of an individual with an illness, which has resulted in her withdrawal of participation in sport. Qualitative research is usually used to investigate reasons, feelings and incentives (Sparkes and Smith 2014). It is also used to explore themes in one's feelings and reasons. Therefore a qualitative approach will be employed in order to collect data surrounding an individuals life experiences. A holistic approach will be employed to provide a volume of rich data to develop a true reflection of the individual's experiences. A holistic approach is described as an interest in every aspect of the participant as a whole not solely in parts such as physical, emotional, mental and spiritual (Sparkes and Smith 2014).

When deciding upon the most appropriate method for collection of data, the research question should be considered. Many recent qualitative studies (Smith 2014, Sparkes 2012, Sparkes 1998) used interviews to provide rich data and explore experiences of the participants. Interviews provide a method where a researcher can directly communicate with a participant. Sparkes and Smith (2014) note interviews will allow a 'conversation with a purpose' (pp. 83) and that the interviewer 'aims to obtain the perspectives, feelings and perceptions from the participant' (pp. 83). In this case study the experiences of an athlete will be explored through verbal communication. Interviews are an effective exploratory tool in research Sparkes and Smith (2014) point out that interviews are the most 'traditional' (pp. 83) method.

Purposeful sampling is mainly used in qualitative research Sparkes and Smith (2014) suggest researchers 'choose an individual, a number of individuals, or a group with whom they have an interest and who they feel will provide rich information' (pp. 24). This is evidenced in my study through the interest I developed in Meg's life prior to undertaking this research. Sparkes and Smith (2014) assert purposeful sampling could be used if the setting suits the researcher. In this instance the location of the participant suited my research. The close proximity of the participant enabled me to set up interviews with ease.

Sparkes and Smith (2014) suggest that qualitative researchers 'adopt a relativist or internal ontology' (pp. 11). Therefore a researcher will understand the world from the participant's viewpoint. Sparkes and Smith (2014) suggest that researchers can adopt a

subjectivist, transactional and constructionist empistemogical view, finding reasons for the participant's views and why they have understood the world in the way they have.

Research design

The research design that this study will be based upon is emergent and reflexive, through the use of a case study. Sparkes and Smith (2014) state that in a qualitative study it is important for a research design to be emergent and reflexive 'as data collection and analysis occur at the same time' *(pp. 29)*. An example of this would be a new theme emerging through discussion with the participant. This may be a concept that the researcher had not recognised initially and therefore the researcher may have to adapt questioning to explore this theme further and build it into the research design.

In order to effectively understand a participants life experiences the key is to immerse oneself in their life. This process began during my second university year, sharing a flat with Meg enabled conversations to take place regarding her experiences. I quickly realised that her story was particularly interesting would be worth researching in depth. Her story was highly emotional and had disrupted her life to a great extent. Sparkes (1998) and Pullen (2013) used this approach when researching the effects of injury on a disrupted sporting life story, their experiences of loss in self-identity and athletic identity. The use of one participant for these researchers allowed greater depth into the individual's life and the presentation of rich data.

The participant- brief biography

Meg was immersed in a running environment from an early age; her family, who all ran themselves, encouraged her to follow in their footsteps. Initially Meg rebelled, trying any other sport she could to avoid running, for example horse riding. It was a teacher that suggested Meg compete in her schools long distance running race. She won her very first experience of long distance running and was hooked. She enjoyed the feeling of winning and having a medal around her neck.

Meg's sporting accolades: seventh in the country for her age in cross-country running and third in the country at 1500m, suggested she was highly competitive. Meg had to cut back on running 3 years ago at the age of 18 and is now 21 years of age. Meg's training slowed

due being diagnosed with an unknown heart condition, symptoms of which first appeared at work when she passed out in the storeroom. Following this incident Meg was assessed by the first aid team and taken to hospital to later discover the unknown condition was most likely cardiac related.

Before Meg stopped running her training everyday was intense with morning runs and evening sessions, taking up the majority of Meg's time. Meg's social life was put on hold when she was running, friends would have to organise events around her training and competition.

Meg has had up to five trips to the hospital and various tests to date in order to confirm a diagnosis, but the condition is remains unknown. She will have several more trips to the hospital over the course of this year; the nurse still needs to conduct more tests before Meg sees the doctor again. Meg is now unable to train hard as the hospital fear she could endanger her health, she has lost her strong athletic identity, she once had.

My biography- position as a researcher

Being a very committed rugby player I know what it takes to have a strong athletic identity and also what it is like to have this taken away through injury. I met Meg at the beginning of 2013 as a flat mate who I would live with for one year. We immediately began discussing sport and running.

Meg and I got to know each other over the course of the whole academic year. Over the course of this year Meg told me about her running experiences and I noticed how her training was dropping off and she was becoming disinterested in the sport. As a keen sportsman and a student captivated by sociology, Meg's identity and growing loss of athletic identity began to engage and interest me greatly. This led me to ask her if she would participate in my undergraduate study.

This study intends to explore the experiences of loss of athletic identity in a female athlete. As an athlete myself I will be able to relate to the problems associated with loss of athletic identity. On the other hand as a male athlete attempting to explore a female's athletic identity there may be a lack of understanding because of gender differences. Similar to

Pullen (2013), as she was a '*female trying to gain an understanding into a male's social reality there will be a limit to my ability in accessing this world*' (pp.16).

Methods

Denscombe (2010), states that the success of qualitative research relies on the capability to respond to developing environments. He also states that this is why qualitative research has flexibility as the researcher has to adapt to different environments or situations within the qualitative study. The use of unstructured interviews allows the interviewer to react to changing situations. Sparkes and Smith 2014, suggest that unstructured interviews start with an open-ended question. The researcher would have a large number of questions, however they would allow the participant to take control. As the interviews unfold the researcher may decide to change their questions or adapt the questions to suit the environment or situation of the interview. The advantages of using unstructured interviews instead of semi structured and structured are that the participant can explore their emotion, events and behaviors. Allowing the participant to have control in the interview allows for a more open and naturally flowing conversation.

There will be three interviews conducted, which will vary in duration depending on the content of the interview. As a rough guide I will try to keep the interviews no longer than an hour and no shorter than thirty minutes. This should allow for the participant to fully express their feeling and emotions in the content raised. Informal conversations will be necessary to set up interviews and upon the initial interview I will aim to meet Meg to discuss themes and ask her if she has any questions regarding the study.

Culver, Gilbert and Sparkes (2012) state that unstructured interviews are more relevant for a narrative study, the researcher gains an accurate life history with more rich data in order to explore the why's and how's. Dale (2000) conducted a study using unstructured interviews looking into the experiences of elite athletes.

Due to the ambiguity in the research area multiple interviews will be used to gather sufficient data. The need for multiple interviews is to gain an understanding of people's lives. A researcher needs sufficient data and to be able to follow up on themes raised during the previous interviews. Culver et al (2012) suggests a researcher should use multiple interviews to allow the participant chance to express their thoughts and feelings.

This study is likely to contain sensitive information that will be discussed during the interviews. Meg will decide where and when the interviews take place and each interview will be recorded. During the interview Meg will share her experiences and I will actively listen. Recognised by Pullen (2013) she cannot allow her friendship with her participant to make her become a 'detached listener' *(pp. 54)*. So with my friendship with Meg I will have to be cautious of not becoming a 'detached listener'.

Interviews will be recorded; once the interview is finished the data can be uploaded onto a laptop to be transcribed verbatim. The transcription will be completed by the researcher, listening to the recording, then typing up the interview onto a laptop. This is a lengthy process however I believe it will give me chance to recapture what the individual was saying and give me time to reflect on what follow up questions to ask during the next interview.

Alongside my unstructured interviews I will have some interview notes with a few key points I wish to discuss. This will involve having key questions and prompts. Sparkes and Smith (2014) state researchers can use probes in their interview notes, they identify three types of probes; 'detail oriented, elaboration and clarification' (pp. 93). I will be using elaboration probes in my interview notes to encourage the participant to elaborate more about a particular point. My interview notes will be available to view in the appendix.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis will be used as described by Sparkes and Smith (2014) it has six phases, which are simple to follow, and allows the researcher to recognise the themes that they wish to discuss. The six key phases are:
   1. *Immersion*
   2. *Generating initial codes*
   3. *Searching for and identifying themes*
   4. *Reviewing themes*
   5. *Defining and naming themes*
   6. *Writing the report*

Due to the nature of the study, there will be a large amount of data to analyse and according to Sparkes and Smith (2014) '*thematic analysis can summarise the key features to a large body of text' (pp. 124)*. However with thematic analysis '*there is a risk of the researcher getting carried away and producing unfounded analysis, that is when interpretations are not supported by the data*' (pp. 126) (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). Another potential weakness of thematic analysis is the way it 'tells us little about artfulness of storytelling and the performative nature or language' (Sparkes and Smith 2014 pp. 126). This suggests that when researchers use thematic analysis the story the participant has told may not be told as fully as sections of transcriptions are used to suit the researchers discussions. This will be addressed in the study with the conscious effort to support any interpretations with data found. The thematic analysis process will be shown in the appendix.

Issues of judgment

In this study I will be judging my research using the five criteria described by Richardson (2000). These five criteria are; 'substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact and expression of a reality' (pp. 937). Pullen (2013), Lincoln and Guba (2007) assert validity, reliability and generalisability do not convey to a qualitative study. As these terms are often associated with quantitative research, Sparkes and Smith (2014) state validity is drawing conclusions on the measurement instrument used. I will use these five criteria's as stated by Richardson (2000).

My study is focused on an under researched area, self-identity and illness within a set of individuals experiences. My study has made a significant contribution into further understanding of this phenomenon. With the use of a case study I was able to collect rich data of an individual's experiences. I aim to be aesthetic by ensuring that my study is pleasing to read. I hope to hold the reader's attention and allow empathy with an individual's viewpoint. I have tried to stay as reflexive as possible during my study clearly stating that I am the researcher. Being a researcher, flat mate and friend I am bound to various social connections. With this in mind I am constantly reflecting upon my own research practice. In terms of 'impact' and 'expression of reality' in my research I will try to make the reader understand Meg's experiences by describing accurate accounts of Meg's life. I hope that by doing this reader will become emotionally invested and make a connection with Meg's experiences.

Ethics

This study has been approved by the Cardiff School of Sport. Meg has been able to access all of the chapters, transcripts and will be able to comment on each chapter of the study. A pseudonym has been used so the participant is unidentifiable. I have been an active listener throughout the research. Sparkes and Smith (2014) state that one can be reflexive during ethics, which allows an analytical lens of my standpoint and self within the study. Reflexivity in relation to ethics according to Sparkes and Smith (2014) is being sensitive to the participant's '*safety, privacy, dignity and autonomy' (pp. 212)*.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS SECTION

High performing body with a purpose

Meg developed a well-disciplined and conditioned body from a young age, involved in high level sports competition. A disciplined body according to Sparkes (2004) is a body, which has been developed through practices such as training or competing. The body then becomes disciplined into certain sporting practices and performances. Meg's body becomes well disciplined through the amount of time she invests into running described in this example:

> "Everyday, Monday forty minute run, Tuesday twenty morning then eight K session at night, Wednesday forty five minute run, Thursday session at night, Friday recovery run thirty minutes, Saturday double day thirty minutes in the morning then thirty-forty five at night, Sunday long ten K session in the morning. Every three weeks you would get a Friday off".

A well-disciplined body does not only invest time into training it invades into an individual's social time as explained:

> "So there would be no going out, I wouldn't see my friends on a weekend, wouldn't see my friends past six o'clock as I had training. That was my choice not my parents, however because my sister was living that lifestyle, so it was easy to filter into mine. Friends became very understanding, they knew I wouldn't be free over the weekends. Arranged stuff during the week, just after school and stuff".

Another example of Meg's investment is described:

> "Yes, yes, it just became second nature, I wouldn't get up and think I am going running now, I would just be up and my kit would be on. I would just walk out the door, there was no thought behind it, I would just get on and do it. There was no real like no I don't want to go, I didn't give myself time, because I knew if I sat there I wouldn't go, I feel ill today so I wont go, so I used to get up kit was on and go. Or you would get up to dad with a torch and be like in your face being like run! Or he would send the dog in if you hadn't got up in time".

These examples suggest that Meg is highly invested in running. Her body has been disciplined through training, competing and interruption of her social life.

Sparkes (1998) suggests that having a well-disciplined body can lead to a primary immediacy, which he describes as 'a state of being when the body functions and performs tasks without conscious effort' (pp.652). Primary immediacy according to Kleiber, Brock, Youngkhill, Dattilo and Cadwell (1995) is created through development of challenging practices which lead to a unity of mind and body. Meg describes this feeling of unity when training at a younger age, "I think when you're young you don't take into account what your body is actually doing, or how much you're making it do, you just sort of like do it and don't really think".

She shows the need for this unity in athletic competition:

> "Annoyed, annoyed because its hard when you sometimes when you're especially when you're getting competitive again, its, sometimes running needs to be mindless sometimes you just need to go out and train you don't need to think about it you don't need think about it you just go out forget about everything and just train".

Meg describes this unity of her mind and body in a few words "it just became second nature". In studies that have explored experiences of athletes with an illness or injury, before their traumatic event, the athletes all appeared to have this unity of mind and body (Sparkes 1998, Pullen (2013) and Stewart, Smith and Sparkes 2011). This mindless interaction between mind and body is clearly important in athletic performance.

Loss and Failure

After Meg was diagnosed with an unknown cardiac condition she began to express her feelings towards her loss of disciplined body and identity and the limitations she experiences because of this, not solely athletic related. Her body is not only tied to a sporting career, but also connected to her young self and future self as she describes:

> "Its just a case of like things that I wanted to do like bungee jumping, ski diving and things like that and I got told that might not be an option anymore and its

just that kind of thing that is restrictive and I would like that to be gone I can just do want I want to I am only 21 so, so there is loads of stuff I haven't done that I would still want to do and it might cause I don't know what the end result of this is going to be but I might have restriction that I cant do certain things and that's a bit annoying".

She communicates the feeling of a constant fight that she has with her body, "so yeah its like a fight between what you can get away with and what you cant get away". There is always a struggle between what she can and cannot do is something she is not accustomed too as she describes:

"Frustrated yeah there is a sense of frustration there between me and my body because I am kind of a bit like, it annoys me that I just want to go out and do something".

Conversely, showing a clear contrast to the beginning of the study when Meg describes an evident mind and body unity, she no longer has primary immediacy. Sparkes (1998) suggests once this primary immediacy is lost an individual finds it hard to create a new body or self.

Sparkes (1998) states this traumatic event has led to a foreign experience for the athlete and in his study he notes it was difficult for the athlete to become accustomed to this, shattering 'their previous taken for granted assumptions about the world' (Sparkes 1998 pp. 658). Sparkes (1998) claims that this will leave the athlete in a state of disarray, which is evident in Meg's comments.

This state of disarray has affected the unity of her mind and body, which supports statements made from Sparkes and Silvennoinen (1999) who note that any 'biological disruption' can have a dramatic effect on mind and body unity. This has led to the gradual loss of athletic self and body. Meg has also lost her title of an athlete to her friends and family. This is evident in the following examples as her friends and family begin to distance Meg from the tittle of 'athlete':

"Yeah, I think you have to take on different roles, and I think that I cant I think that obviously when you're running, training and competing at a certain level your sort of known as an athlete. Like you will be introduced as an athlete or

introduced as a middle distance runner or oh yeah that's the girl that runs, where as now obviously your not just labelled you have to sort of take on something else, because you don't do it anymore so its if you called me a runner now I would be like, you can hardly call me that I run twice a week".

Meg recalls another example:

"People would come up and be like ohhhh is this the runner? And my parents would have to in a very sheepish voice by like no but she does run as well and you're like yeah thanks for that, I did run but I don't anymore".

From the extracts above it is evident that identity is not only about how you see yourself but how others perceive you. Noted by Sparkes et al (1999) when Sparkes himself does not want anyone to see him in pain, as he does not want anyone to perceive him as weak or ill. For an individual to be accepted into a sports culture they have to display certain traits which Meg displayed in her early years. Illness affected her family and friends perception of her as an athlete, assisting to push her out of the athletic/ sporting culture.

Transitioning identity

During the course of the interviews Meg described a change in her identity because of not competing and become unwell, explaining:

"I kind of think that my athletic identity is still there or should I say my sporting identity is still there because I am still involved in sports but as an athlete I am not that involved any more but I think I still have the identity but I think it has changed slightly from being the athlete to being the coach or involved in it".

Thus suggesting there has been a shift in Meg's identity, so it could be considered not stable. Woodward (1997) suggests that there is a nature of identity, thus once an identity is constructed it is ever changing or evolving dependent on the environment an individual is in.

As Meg is not competing anymore she feels she cannot call herself an athlete, her athletic identity has faded into the background. However she is still deeply involved in sport

whether is be coaching or watching, this she describes as a sporting identity. She explains this difference between the two identities:

> "I think that an athletic identity there's a lot more pressure there's a lot more sort of down to you about what work you put in, if you don't put the work in you aint getting it out urmmm and there is also a lot more reward like obviously having a medal… whereas with coaching I am still involved I think a lot more about the final outcome whereas as an athlete that was down to my coach the final outcome wasn't really in my head, I just had to run as hard as I could around a field, so yeah I think to me they're different things… sporting identity is being involved in sport but not in the athlete role… someone that had an illness or injury you sort of go up and down in the scale it's a bit more you feel the lows and at the lows you cant really call yourself an athlete because your not really doing anything that much unless obviously its like a two month injury and then it makes no difference but a four year span is a bit like can I ?!".

She describes this transition that has occurred in her life, suggesting when athletes experience an illness or injury their athletic identity is not lost but changed or altered into a sporting identity. Furthermore she states that this new sporting identity is hard and virtually impossible to lose once one has interacted with sport to a certain level. This suggests that Meg's sporting identity is placed at the top of her identity hierarchy. This identity hierarchy is noted in Sparkes' (1998) and Sparkes et al's (1999) studies when participants still placed athletic identity at the top of their identity hierarchy despite having a career ending injury. Meg describes this inability to drop or lose a sporting identity:

> "I mean I can see it in my parents all the time… but still to this day sort of twenty, twenty five years on they are heavily involved in sport still they will never lose it and I have never met anyone who has competed at a certain level and just lose it everyone that my parents used to train with is still involved in running somewhere along the line you will still see them with their children at races or something I don't think, I don't think I have never met anyone that has been able to switch it off".

It seemed to me that Meg was trying to protect her lost athletic identity during our interviews, avoiding conversations about running. She seems to avoid conversation at all costs regarding the subject of running as she describes:

"Yeah, from saying I used to run! Definitely, I now just protect myself from having to say that so I will use anything else, or sometimes I do say it but it will be more of like a I will be a bit more like I will explain why I don't do it anymore, so I will like give them the story, just to be like yeah I did do it".

In another example she recalls:

"Yeah, I don't want, I feel I bit protective when people ask me what sport I do simply because you want to be proud and you want to be able to tell them like yeah I do long distance running, whereas now the sentence I say is I DID".

However despite this Meg is determined not to give up the idea of not competing:

"I have got urmmmm the next five years to make an impression on running again… No, I could get back to it… Yeah to get back there yes it is easy… give me another four years and I might be there… Where as now it is only at three years so I am hoping it will be wont be a massive change to start again".

Charmaz (1987) describes this as an entrenched self, whereby one holds onto self that has been created in the past. She states that individuals will hold onto clear images of themselves to readily articulate, even after an illness. Sparkes et al (1999) similarly found his participants, rugby players with a spinal cord injury, appeared to be holding onto entrenched selves.

Time with Meg enabled me to gain a clearer understanding of why she was holding onto her past self, and wanted her body and mind unity to return. She reinforced that nothing was as rewarding as winning a race:

"I don't think there's anything quiet like earning it yourself, I don't think it will ever be quiet like having the gold medal around your neck… Nothing else matches, I have tired everything else, nothing else comes close to the feeling of when you win… I have tried academics doesn't match it, I have tried doing just fitness I have tried just being fit that didn't match it, I tried being involved but not racing so I will go down to training and spend time with my Mum and Dad but I wont run and that doesn't match it. I have tried art that doesn't match it, I mean I am okay at art but that isn't the same satisfaction but it just doesn't match it".

Meg has tried other options but none are comparable to her running. Similarly during Sparkes and Smith's (1999) study, rugby players with a spinal cord injury expressed these same ideas of non-reproducible feelings.

This past self pleased other people, Meg explains:

"Unfortunately my dad paid little attention to me and Lily urmmm the only attention he gave us was through running… I know how to get his attention if I want it I know how to get it I just go out and run, the amount of attention I get when I have gone out and run, you cant get it from anywhere else… I think there is an aspect of urmmm I do want to please them and I want them to be proud… I think they want me to run again because even when we are at the hospital the main important question, is, that they ask is, is she able to train. Its not like how is this going to effect her life in 50 years, its when can she train".

This need to please other people that Meg describes is related to the term entanglement, defined by Coakley and White (1999) as 'relationships which act to involve an individual more and more deeply in a role or activity' (pp. 84). Entanglement can be with a parent or friend; these are seen to be key in the progress of an individual's commitment to sport. From the extracts above it is evident that Meg's entanglement is with her parents. This commitment and entanglement 'soon becomes consolidated by reputations and identities' (Coakley and White, 1999) (pp. 85). When athletes achieve success, this then produces reputations and identities, which are regularly confirmed by their parents or friends. Thus these reputations are reinforced through the continuing involvement in their sports. This is

apparent in the above extract as Meg becomes successful in her sport and wishes to continue to reproduce her sporting reputation to please her parents.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION

This study supports the current literature through the suggestion that athletes hold onto past selves after a traumatic event. This study has looked into the experiences of female athletes with illness, which is an underdeveloped phenomenon, compared to injury. The study addresses the notions of 'gloried self' and 'entrenched self' suggesting these terms are present and prevalent in current athletes. (Adler et al 1989 and Sparkes 1999).

Holding on to athletic past

Meg formed a very strong athletic identity from an early age through her consistent involvement in athletics. Hawkins, Coffee and Soundy (2013) assert that once this athletic identity has been formed this is placed at the 'apex' of one's identity hierarchy. They also noted that even when an athlete became ill, athletic identity remained when other aspects of the individual were lost. This is evident in Meg's case as her athletic self remains whilst other aspects have become lost.

Meg has attempted to move on, attempting a variety of activities. She has not however felt any reward from these different activities. The risks for Meg are the return to an athletic self that is founded upon unsuccessful identity changes. She finds herself effectively 'stuck' in an athletic identity that she cannot or is not able to relinquish. Sparkes and Smith (2008) suggest that when an individual experiences an SCI (spinal cord injury) they are unable to let go of their former able bodied self. Sparkes and Smith (2008) propose that the individual is struggling to form new identities whilst being in a chaos narrative unable to voice feeling and emotions.

This is different from experiences shared by Meg, she has created an identity for herself whilst she is recovering from her illness. She notes she has entered a sporting identity rather than an athletic one. She suggests that without competing she can no longer consider herself athletic. However she is still highly involved in the sport, for example watching her sister compete in races, aspiring to work as a coach for athletics and attending race meets with her parents. Thus it could be argued that she has found a way to be with her illness. Meg now has to consider which activities her body will be able to perform, something she had not previously had to consider, this has led to Meg creating a new identity while still in recovery.

Her new sporting identity will allow her to follow a career or be able to carry out certain activities. She has begun to take on the role of a coach or teacher, which still allows her to remain close enough to her chosen sport. This suggests that Meg is far away from the term used by Sparkes and Smith (2008) chaotic body, which suggests that an individual has formed a new body in relation to being stuck in a chaos narrative. Sparkes and Smith (2008) note that the participant's life has been 'deemed to be meaningless and devoid of purpose and hope' (pp.13). Meg's story contrasts this notion in that she has formed a new identity in life. Meg also avoids the hope that is attached to the restitution narrative as described by Sparkes (2004) in which he states restitution narrative provides a sense of hope for a cure of an individual's illness that may not occur in their lifetime. This identity is created to avoid such terms as described by Marcus and Nurius (1986) as' feared self'. This is a self that an individual does not want to become. By creating this sporting identity it allows Meg to escape the feared self of not having a career. She is able to still be involved in running to a certain degree. Then once she has recovered from the illness she has not completely distanced herself from running.

Despite forming a new identity Meg still finds herself holding onto entrenched self and can readily articulate images of her past athletic self. Charmaz (1994) notes that these constant struggles to match up to past self will only end up in identity dilemmas. This may lead to athlete's 'increasing the distance between their past self and present identities' (pp. 658 Sparkes (1998)). Increasing the distance will only result in athletes viewing their new selves as negative and athletes will find it increasingly difficult to live with this.

Adler and Adler (1989) state that this athletic self could be seen as a 'gloried self', described as experiencing glory in a sporting environment. In their study they note some characteristics of this 'gloried self' as greedy and intoxicating. They further suggest that this emergence of the gloried self can lead to other selves being cast aside. This gloried self is apparent within Meg as she describes the inability to reproduce the feeling of winning medals. Meg's involvement in running lasted for a considerable length of time and she was used to the idea of winning and liked it. This gloried self was able to thrive for years and narrowed her identity as she became completely invested in running. Further, this gloried self has constricted her other identities resulting in a disconnection from them. This might explain the difficultly she experiences when trying to form a new identity, she has become too attached to her gloried self. Adler et al (1989) supports this stating that

athletes may scapegoat other identities, as there is an increasing 'gloried self'. With this increasing gloried self an individual will find it difficult to make a long term plan and will become solely engrossed in the present.

Mind or body

Illness will leave Meg unable to do certain tasks and jobs. This is something that is new to her and will be difficult to comprehend. Sparkes (2004) suggests that body 'is taken for granted and defined as a smoothly functioning machine that goes until it breaks down' (pp. 410). She will now be unable to perform thrill seeking activities, she may have to alter her training programs to keep fit and she may have to consider a career change as high amounts of stress may exacerbate her illness. Prior to her illness Meg had a disciplined body that as Frank's (1995) concludes leads to a state of control and expectedness. Frank's (1995) asserts that this can lead a situation whereby an athlete can experience body disassociation. This disassociation with the body can leave an individual hating their own body experiencing a sense of betrayal. This is evidenced in Meg who feels her body has let her down and gets in the way of everyday life.

However once Meg is clear from illness she expects to be able to be back to her old athletic self, leaving her new identity behind suggesting she is still in the restitution narrative as described by Franks (1995). She still has aspirations of return to her former self and being able to compete again. However this disruption between her mind and body unity has not been taken into consideration. She expects her body to just be in unity with her mind when she wants. She does not recognise the struggle she will face when trying to regain mind and body unity. This struggle to maintain mind and body unity when ill is evident in Sparkes (2004) study when considering cyclist Lance Armstrong's experiences of cancer in his autobiography. Armstrong was able to maintain, regain mind and body unity post illness and return to elite sport. However during this time Lance was solely focused on returning to sport he did not countenance other career pathways and never created a new identity. Armstrong was fiercely holding onto a restitution narrative while surviving cancer. This study shows that regaining mind and body unity is possible, however it needs dedication solely on becoming an elite athlete again and not having other identities whilst being ill. Meg will not only have to regain her mind and body self she will have to switch identities focusing again solely on the athletic identity which has not been present for four years.

Limitations

Reflecting upon the processes used, I decided to employ unstructured interviews. The rationale behind this was to allow the participant to freely express their emotions and feelings. This approach sometimes meant the participant strayed away from the topic in discussion and that led to further interesting data. However unstructured interviews can be problematic. Sparkes and Smith (2014) claim they can create large amounts of data which are not used in the study. Multiple themes may be generated instead of the provision of two or three clear themes that are required for an effective study. This can result in a time consuming study Sparkes and Smith (2014). Furthermore Sparkes and Smith (2014) state unstructured interviews can be difficult to conduct for an inexperienced researcher.

I used an interview guide to direct the types of questions I wished to ask during the interview. However during the interviews I would exclude some questions or develop them on the spot when the conversation revealed an idea I wished to explore further. For this adaptability and flexibility to work it requires the interviewer to be an active listener, Sparkes and Smith (2014) state this is a 'process of being attentive and responsive' (pp. 95) the need to be receptive to your participant, leading to the researcher adapting their questions. With the use of a researcher's journal I would have been able to reflect more clearly and precisely on the interviews and allowing more time for the formulation of the next set of interview questions and topics for t discussion. A clear example of a researcher's journal is given in the appendix of Pullen's (2013) study where she demonstrates evidence of her reflection on the interviews.

Implications and future research

This phenomenon should begin to be explored from a coaching and health care lens as this area of research should involve health care professionals in particular those involved in physiotherapy and rehabilitation teams in sporting settings. When an athlete is returning from injury the health care professionals should be aware of changing psychological and mental states of well- being, which are noted in this study along with others (Sparkes 1998). This study may assist in alerting coaches to the psychological and social implications involved when an athlete becomes ill or injured. More care should be taken to ensure athletes have recovered from an injury or illness not only physically but mentally as

well; this could be ensured through communication and reflection during monitoring and reviewing of progress.

Future research could explore experiences of embodiment and athletic identity, in relation to other sports with a view to focusing upon the phenomenon of illness in order to address the current lack of literature. Such reflections on embodiment and athletic identity following a traumatic event may begin to highlight the struggle athletes have in maintaining or restoring their body self. Thus it may be insightful to look into the links between having a strong athletic identity taken away/lost and whether one is able to find a new self or get stuck trying to recreate an entrenched self.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study has presented the disruptive nature that an illness can have on an individual in relation to mind-body unity and athletic identity. The struggle between mind and body unity during illness has been highlighted. This study identifies the struggle an individual faces holding onto an entrenched self. The findings of this study have conveyed the importance of exploring an individuals experience with a regard to understanding mind-body unity and athletic identity. Significantly the problems related with maintaining a mind-body unity and holding onto an entrenched athletic self after an illness. Furthermore, this study has extended the literature in regard to female's experiences after a traumatic event or biological disruption.

This phenomenon provides a large opportunity for future research. This provides a scope for healthcare professionals and coaches to look into developing aftercare for individuals who have experienced an illness or injury.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A .

<u>Interview guide</u>

When did you start running?

What was your highest level?

What were your motives?

What sport do your family do and to what level?

Did sport influence your life choices for example college, school, university degree?

Would your friends consider yourself an athlete? Are your friends athletes?

How often did you used to train?
      How committed were you?
      Would you miss other things to train?

What is the state of your medical condition at the moment?
      What can you do?
      What can't you do?
      How often at hospital?
      Risks?

APPENDIX B.

Example of Data analysis

CN: Tell me when did you start running?

When I was in year 5, 2002, 9 years old

CN: What made you want to start running?

I didn't want to start, I did everything but try to run, tennis, gymnastics, everything I could think of, horse riding. I did everything I could not to be a runner because my sister was a runner and my parents so I did everything to try not to be a runner. Then I realized I was crap at every other sport so I endedup running. My PE teacher when we were doing an athletics lesson she noticed that I would be good at cross country, so did the trials then won it.

CN: Did you ever actually enjoy it?

When I won I was enjoying it, I won in my first race which was unfortunate as I was stuck.

CN: So you just wanted to play a sport you could win?

Yeah I am like that really, if I cant win I don't like doing it, as my sister was still at school I refused to race until she left as I knew she would beat me. As I knew I would not win as she would be there doing it. So as soon as she left I agreed to do it with the teacher.

CN: When did you start racing?

2003, year 5,

CN: Did you start training then?

I went down and start to muck around and go out for a run with my dad, didn't have a coach at that stage. Running club at school.

CN: Did you feel pushed into running as your family have done it?

As soon as I started winning I enjoyed it.

CN: So your motives were just winning?

Yeah just liked winning, I liked having a medal,

CN: What level did your parents reach or get to?

Both competed at commonwealth level.

CN: When was that?

1980,

CN: Did they win?

No my mum under performed, because she refused to slow down training for it, my dad pulled out got selected but pulled out

CN: Do you think that's why your parents pushed you to do as well as you could?

I think so, my parents had a very good life off running, they moved to the states and were very successful over there and trained with successful people. They think through running it can give you a lot of benefits. Not just medals, they believe I can have a good life from running.

CN: That not what you wanted?

Not at that point, it became a social thing, I didn't realize I was running half the time, just suddenly became fitter and fitter, getting better and better.

CN: Would you say your life has been influenced by running/ sport?

Yeah, majorly everything till the moment I stopped was influenced by running. So there would be no going out, I wouldn't see my friends on a weekend, wouldn't see my friends past 6 o'clock as I had training. That was my choice not my parents however because my sister was living that lifestyle, so it was easy to filter into mine. Friends became very understanding, they knew I wouldn't be free over the weekends. Arranged stud during the week, just after school and stuff.

CN: Did that influence your course and school you went to?

Not so much school, as we went to the nearest school, but had that school never supported my sisters running my mum would never have sent me there. They trialed it with my sister and they knew it was ok.

CN: Do you reckon that's was you do a sports course now?

Yeah, I think it is, I think sport gave me boundaries that aren't there in other things. When I was a child it gave me a lot of discipline that a lot of people don't have when they don't take part in sport. So that's why I liked sport not just because I did it.