GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE EFFECT OF RECEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT ON RECOVERING FROM A SPORT’S INJURY
Contents

Acknowledgements | i
Abstract | ii

CHAPTER ONE | Introduction | 1

CHAPTER TWO | Literature Review | 3
  2.1 Injury | 3
  2.2 Social Support | 4
  2.3 Gender Differences in Social Support | 11

CHAPTER THREE | Method | 16
  3.1 Participants | 16
  3.2 Interview Guide | 19
  3.3 Procedure and Data Analysis | 19

CHAPTER FOUR | Results and Discussion | 21
  4.1 Conclusion | 31
  4.2 Future Directions | 32
  4.3 Strengths and Limitations | 33

References | 35

Appendices | 43
APPENDIX A – Interview Guide | 43
APPENDIX B – Informed Consent Form | 53
APPENDIX C – Social Support Information Sheet | 56
APPENDIX D – Example Interview Transcription | 57
List of Tables

Table 1 – Female participant information | 17

Table 2 – Male participant information | 18
List of Figures

Figure 1 – Conceptual Model of Social Support Process. (Holt & Hoar, 2006) | 5
Acknowledgments

Thank you to dissertation supervisor Ian Mitchell for the help in carrying out the investigation.

Also thank you to all the participants who agreed to take part in the study.
Abstract

Aim – The study looked to find out more from the gender differences that exist in received social support during injury rehabilitation. The rationale of the study was to add to previous research because whether gender differences in social support when recovering from an injury actually exist is still unclear. The research could also help athletes coping in future injury rehabilitation processes. Method – The study utilised qualitative semi-structured interviews in order to gain rich information on the injured athletes social support experiences. Findings - The study found that males and females differed in the type of social support they believed to be the most effective. Females suggested emotional support as the most effective, where as males suggested informational support. Another finding was that females suggested friends to be providers of their emotional support, whereas males did not. A further finding was that females looked to mobilise or seek their support more than males. The implications for this could be that males should look to seek their support more often and also look to receive more emotional support due to the benefits this type of support could have. Research in the future should come into looking at how to train an athlete’s social support network to maximise the support they provide.
INTRODUCTION
**Introduction**

Social Support is a multidimensional construct that can help people cope with hassles or stressors which aid recovery from physical or mental damage and has been related to reducing the chances of mortality (Aldwin, 2000). Social support would therefore be very beneficial to help athletes cope with stressors which arise during an injury rehabilitation process.

Sport’s injuries are very common misfortunes, which result in preventing athletes from performing. Over the last 10 years there has been an increase in the amount of research investigating athletes’ psychological responses and rehabilitation from sports injury (Bianco, 2001). The integrated model of response to a sport injury by Wiese-Bjornstal et al. (1998) helps to understand the psychological responses to an injury. The model posits that behavioural and emotional responses result from a cognitive appraisal of the sport injury which is influenced by personal and situational factors. The social support construct lies within the situational factors which influences cognitive appraisal of an injury. Social support has been identified as a coping resource to aid injury rehabilitation, within the model.

Social Support is basically the interaction and communication with other people; many scholars now agree that the term social support is a multidimensional construct that involves structural, functional and perceptual dimensions (Bianco and Eklund, 2001). Generally research supports the conclusion that social support is critical in handling stressors such as crisis, mental and physical health, unemployment and even mortality risk (Albrecht and Adelman, 1984). In terms of an injury rehabilitation setting, Ievleva and Orlick (1991) suggest that social support helps athletes cope with the stressors they experience during the injury-rehabilitation process.
The social support that is received during an injury process is mentioned as helpful by many athletes. Elite athletes such as Andrew Flintoff mention the social support they receive during their injury rehabilitation process.

Very little research has reported that gender differences exist in social support, and even less has looked at athlete’s social support when recovering from an injury. However the research which has been carried out, such as Shumaker and Hill (1991) suggest that women receive and use social support more than men do, and although women tend to have smaller but more intensive social networks than men, because the support they receive serves more functions they are therefore more likely than men to receive support. Also Barbee et al. (1993) propose that a traditional female role emphasizes nurturance and emotional expressiveness as opposed to a male gender role which emphasizes achievement, autonomy and emotional control. The female roles of nurturance and emotional expressiveness would obviously lend itself more to social support.

Overall research into social support with regards to gender in general suggests women have more intensive social networks and seek support more readily, and because of the higher amounts of received social support women would appear more benefited than men in terms of injury rehabilitation.

It is apparent from the relevant research literature that social support is beneficial for health and well-being. It has also been linked to successful injury rehabilitation with gender being highlighted as an important moderating variable in the stress-response process (Holt & Hoar, 2006). However, there is a gap in the existing literature that has failed to adequately address the importance of gender and social support. It was therefore the purpose of the present study to examine differences in gender and social support in injury rehabilitation.
iii METHOD
**Method**

*Participants*

The current study contained a purposeful sample of eight participants. Patton (2002) suggests that purposeful sampling involves the selection of ‘information rich’ cases in order for the researcher to address the question. Criterion sampling was used to select information-rich cases to predetermined criteria (Patton, 2002). The criteria firstly required a sport’s injury from a team sport which forced the participant from training and/or competing for 6 weeks and were therefore classified as a serious injury. The sample was also required to account for differences in gender, type of team sport and stage of rehabilitation, which could have an effect. All eight participants completed the same interview. At the time of the interview, an athlete from each gender were at a different stage of rehabilitation, thus one male and one female were interviewed at early, mid, late and just returning phases of recovery. Participants’ ages ranged from 21-27. (M= , SD= ) with an equal gender divide. The sports of the participants were football, rugby, hockey and netball. The injuries sustained were torn hamstring (n=2), knee ligament damage (n=2), ankle ligament damage (n=3) and broken ankle (n=1). All demographic and participant injury information is provided in table 1.
Table 1 – Female participant information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Length of Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Hours commitment to sport before injury</th>
<th>Injury status at time of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>Knee ligament damage</td>
<td>7-8 weeks</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>Beginnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Broken Ankle</td>
<td>40 weeks</td>
<td>8-9 hours</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Torn Hamstring</td>
<td>9 weeks</td>
<td>11 hours</td>
<td>End, Just before return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Ankle ligament damage</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
<td>Just returned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 – Male participant information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Length of Rehabilitation</th>
<th>Hours commitment to sport before injury</th>
<th>Injury status at time of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Ankle ligament damage</td>
<td>6-7 weeks</td>
<td>10 Hours</td>
<td>Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Knee ligament damage</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>7 Hours</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Torn Hamstring</td>
<td>16 weeks</td>
<td>10 Hours</td>
<td>End, a week from returning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Ankle ligament damage</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
<td>Just returned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview Guide

An interview guide was used to carry out semi-structured interviews, in order to explore the differences of social support received in an injury rehabilitation process, between genders. The interview guide (see Appendix 1) was based on a review of the relevant literature (e.g., Brewer, 2001; Bianco and Eklund, 2001; Hoar and Holt, 2006). As Patton (2002) suggests the purpose of an interview guide helps to list particular questions or issues that were to be explored during the interview. Probes were also used for elaboration and clarification purposes, this was to gain responses which were as consistent as possible (Patton, 2002).

The interview guide comprised of four sections in total, the first of which studied the demographic information of the injury itself. One section explored the subject’s social support prior to the injury itself. Another of the sections examined the injured athlete’s perceived availability of social support, so how the subjects actually appraise their social support. The last section of the interview then investigated the subject’s enacted support which relates to the support that was actually received as opposed to what was thought to be available. The content and structure was checked over by an independent researcher before the study was carried. Prior to the study a pilot study was administered on an injured athlete not participating in the study, after which some of the questions were re-worded.

Procedure and Data Analysis

All eight participants were contacted prior to the experiment to discuss their willingness to take part and explain the purpose of the study. All the participants agreed to participate and convenient times and locations were arranged to carry out the interviews. Voluntary informed consent was gained prior to the interview (Patton, 2002). All participants were assured of anonymity (see appendix 2). Four of the interviews were carried out at the interviewer’s
home, two were carried out in the participant’s home and two were carried out at the university. All of the interviews were conducted by the researcher and lasted between 15 and 24 minutes. Prior to the interview the participants were given an information sheet to make them aware of the different types of social support (see appendix 3) All the names of the participants were altered to numbers to remain anonymous. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim (Silverman, 1997). The interview transcripts were then inductively analysed within a deductive framework, which involved creating individual case profiles for each participant (Biddle and Mutrie, 2001). Themes that emerged from the transcripts were then able to be identified. Copies of the transcriptions and case profiles were returned to each respective participant, these were then checked to see if they were accurate and reflected their injury rehabilitation experience. All the participants agreed that the case profiles provided an accurate account, this member checking contributed to trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Themes were then compared within gender to begin with to view any general gender themes that arose.

When the individual case profiles were complete (see Appendix 4 for an example transcription), the themes that arose from each gender were compared and contrasted against each other to search for any differences. The contrasting themes were then analyzed to see if there were gender differences in received social support when recovering from a sport’s injury. The results and the discussion sections are combined, with a conclusion at the end including general summaries, future research directions and strengths and limitations.
References


APPENDICES
Appendix A – Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Section 1: Introduction (not recorded)

Hello, I’m Sam Long, a student from University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. Firstly, thanks for agreeing to participate in this interview study. I am conducting some research into social support during the rehabilitation process of a sports injury. The purpose of the interviews is to explore the perceived differences of received social support between genders.

In relation to this interview, I am hoping to get a better understanding of your experiences of the social support that you may have received or perceived to be available to you during the injury and how that may have impacted on the way you psychologically responded to the injury.

The information gained from this particular study will be used within my dissertation. I must emphasise that the source of any information will be kept confidential even though I may use direct quotes from it. I am using a digital recorder in order to record the interview and to retain accurate information after the interview is complete. Again, the recordings will remain confidential and only used to transcribe your interview.

As a participant in this study, you have several rights. First, your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and free to decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. It is important that you know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. The purpose of the interview is to learn as much as possible from your received social support during the injury experience. Therefore I would appreciate it if you could take your time to answer each question and if you are uncertain about anything, please ask and I can clarify it. Also, if you do not feel comfortable in answering any questions, then you can decline to comment and I will move on to the next question. Please be as honest as you possibly can and avoid giving me answers that you may think I want you to give. The more information and detail you can provide the better.

Please feel free to ask me any questions at anytime – I’ll be happy to answer them as best I can. The interview contains a section relating to the demographic information of the injury
and a large section on your social support received during the injury. At the end of the interview, there will be an opportunity for you to add anything that you felt was important and not covered in the interview.

(Recorded)

Do you have any questions so far regarding what we have spoken about? If not, then we can proceed with the interview. As you can see from the copy of the interview guide, the
interview comprises of a section on the demographic information regarding your injury, and three sections regarding the social support during the injury

Outline here the different types of social support and distinction between definitions of perceived and received support (provide a copy to the participant).

**Demographic information:**

Just to start the interview, I would like to ask you some questions on your involvement in sport and the nature of your injury.

- Have you fully recovered from your injury now?
  
  *Probe:* What is your current injury status?

- How long in total has the injury prevented you from training fully and competing?

- Before you actually got injured how committed were you to your sport – that is, how many hours throughout a normal week would you spend training and/or competing in sport?

- How important to you is your involvement in sport?
  
  *Probe:* Has this changed since you got injured?

- Since your injury, has your commitment to your sport changed in any way and if so why do you think that is?

- Before the current injury, had you had any previous injury experiences?
  
  *Probe:* Were they similar to your most recent one?
Can you think back to when you had your injury and give some indication of how long it was before you returned fully to your sport?

**Existing Social Support Network**

The following section’s main aim is to consider the athlete’s social network structure, internal relationships and supportive provisions before getting injured.

Okay, I would like to move on now and ask some questions that relate to your social support experiences. If possible, take a few seconds and think about your situation before you got injured – these next few questions relate to your social support before you got injured.

- Can you describe your ‘typical week’ both in terms of your sport commitment and also any other activities that you may undertake? If possible, try and remember what a ‘typical week’ was like before you got injured.

- Which people (in that typical week) would you say that you were closest to within your sport?
  
  *Probe*: What about in your social life, is there anybody you would say you are close to that isn’t really involved in your sport?

  *Probe*: Family, friends, partners etc

- Can you think back to what you have considered to be a significant problem (any problem) that you may have had before getting injured?

- How do you think you coped with that problem?
  
  *Probe*: Would you say that you knew people that could help you with that problem?

  *Probe*: Can you give examples of certain people who helped you? (Sport and non-sport related)
Probe: Could you have called on more than one person to help you?

Probe: In relation to the different support types that you read earlier on, which people provided the various types of support for you?

Probe: If not, what do you think you would do in order to try and solve a particular problem? (Sport and non-sport related)

- Do you think that the support you normally have has changed since being injured?
  Probe: If so why do you think it has changed?

Perceived availability of support/injury appraisal.

*Generally looking to explore types of appraisal of the injury (i.e. primary and secondary), matching demands of the stressor to the perception of availability of support types, the way in which the athletes evaluated the quality or availability of types of support, how perception of availability has an effect on primary and secondary appraisals, and controllability/coping.*

When examining social support and its influence on an injured athlete’s response, the literature proposes that the belief that support is available reduces the effects of stress by changing the way you view the injury situation. The next few questions will relate to the way you viewed the availability of social support when you were injured.

- How do you feel the injury will affect you?
  Probe: Do you think the injury will benefit you at all?

  Probe: If so, how?

  Probe: If not, do you feel any harm or loss to you as a result of being injured?

- Do you feel threatened by the injury?
Probe: What about long term, your future?

Probe: If not a threat, what about the injury being a challenge to you?

- Initially, how did you think you were going to be able to cope with the situation?
  Probe: Did you think about what coping options were available to you?
  Probe: Whether the coping option would actually solve the problem?
  Probe: Did the way you cope change at all? How, why?

- Generally, how did you feel about what support you thought was available to you when you became injured? (emphasise the perception of availability)

- In relation to some of the stressful situations that you have suffered from the injured, can you tell me specifically how you felt about the social support that you thought was available to you to help you deal with these situations?

  Probe: Is the support available what you want?
  Probe: Is there any other support that you need and are not receiving?
  Probe: What about the available support from your ‘normal’ network?

- Do you think that your belief that support was available changed the way you appraised your injury initially?
  Probe: How, why? (link to positive or challenging from previous question)

- Do you think that your perception/belief that support was available changed the way in which you are coping with your injury?

- Does knowing that the support is available help you deal/cope with the injury?
- Can you think of any situations during the injury when your perception of available support was not going to help a particular situation?

- Can you think of a certain aspect of when you were injured that you believed to be under your control?
  *Probe: What social support did you think was available to you then?*

- Can you think of a certain aspect of when you were injured that you believed to be out of your control?
  *Probe: What social support did you think was available to you then?*

**Enacted support.**

The things people say and do for one another has been referred to as received support. This kind of support has been highlighted to reduce the effects of stress that some people may have (e.g. certain stressful situations when injured). In the following section, I would like to ask you a few questions on the social support that you actually received during your rehabilitation as opposed to what you thought was available to you.

- What specific types of social support have you actually received during your injury?
  *Probe: Who are the people who are lending their support? Are they from your existing ‘network’ or new?*

  *Probe: Has the support change with time – type or providers?*

  *Probe: How has the support changed and why?*
Probe: Do different people provide different types of support? E.g. –family – emotional support etc.

- Has the support you receive matched what you needed to cope with specific stressors? (for example, somebody to give you a lift in a car when you were incapacitated)
  
  **Probe:** Why not – was your perception of what was available different to that of what was received?

  Probe: How did they help you cope?

  Probe: Has the support you received change over time? If so how?

- Are you satisfied with the support you are receiving?
  
  **Probe:** Why? Why not?

  **Probe:** If you could change any of the support you received what would you change? How would you improve the quality of the support received?

  **Probe:** Did it change over time. If so, how did it change?

- How often do you receive support? (link to specific types on sheet)
  
  **Probe:** Is the support received from the same people or has this changed with time?

  **Probe:** Has there been a time when you received too much support?

- Have particular social support types been received for certain stressors that you have experienced?
  
  **Probe:** Have they been effective in helping you deal with the stressors?

  **Probe:** Are certain types of support/providers more effective than others?
• How do you think the support you received is helping you in deal with certain stressors?
  
  _Probe_: Does receiving certain types of support initiate your coping? If so how?

• Do you think you changed the way you normally cope with stress after receiving certain types of social support?
  
  _Probe_: Or dealing with certain types of stress/stressors?

• Are there any types of support that you would say are the most effective toward dealing will your efforts to cope with your injury?

• How do you mobilise your social support? How is it activated?
  
  _Probe_: Do you approach specific providers?
  
  _Probe_: Do specific people/providers approach you?

• Can you give me examples of helpful and unhelpful support that you received? Why?

**Conclusion**

I think that has covered all the questions that I had in relation to your injury. Is there anything that you would perhaps like to comment on at all regarding the interview? Is there anything at this stage that you would like to add to the interview that hasn’t been covered? The next stage of the process is for me to transcribe this interview and check through for the accuracy in relation to the recording. I will then send you a copy of the interview and if possible could you read through it and make sure that it is accurate and reflects how you felt about the injury process? If you then want to add or take anything out I can do that before progressing with the study.
Can I just say thanks for your time in conducting this interview, it really is appreciated and I'm sure that you have produced some interesting data that I and others can use in the future to assist the rehabilitation process of injured athletes.
Subject: Name ____________________________ Sex: M / F
Date of birth ____________________________

Investigators: Samuel Long (Student) Ian Mitchell (Member of Staff)

Ethical Approval Gained? Yes / No

Title of the Study:
Gender Differences in the Effect of Received Social Support on Recovering from a Sport’s Injury

Objective and Procedures to be Employed

Before you read and consider the information presented below it is important that you are aware that all of the proposed exercise tests and measurement techniques have been examined by an ethics committee, which has accepted that the proposed study is suitable for use with consenting, human subjects.

Objectives
The main aim of the study is to add more to the existing research in the area of perceived value of social support received in aiding injury rehabilitation, between genders.
Exercise protocol
You will be required to attend 1 interview which will last approximately 40 minutes. Interviews will be conducted in a convenient location. The interview will explore the participants received social support and the effects of this social support on their injury rehabilitation.

Potential Risks
The risks could be that the subject talks about something harmful to them; if this happens then they will be directed away from this subject. If harm is still felt then referral suggestion will be made, for example to psychologists.

Benefits
In being involved in this study it will enable information to be gained on the differences between different genders received social support when recovering from an injury. This information will then be able to be added to the existing research in this area. The subject will also find out about the benefits of social support for the future.

The Data
All data collected during the testing will remain anonymous and will be treated with the strictest confidence, although it could form the basis of eventual scientific publications and/or presentations.

NB - The University and its staff accept no liability for any matters arising, either directly or indirectly, from the information and recommendations given to you as a result of the outcomes of your test. It is the responsibility of the athlete to ensure that the Sport Scientist is aware of any medical conditions or other information that might affect either the test itself or the interpretation of the results and subsequent recommendations.
Statement by the Subject

I have been made fully aware of the risks and benefits involved from partaking in the present study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time and that the results of the study will be treated anonymously and with total confidentiality.

I have had my attention drawn to the document produced by the American College of Sports Medicine (1997) entitled “Policy Statement Regarding the use of Human Subjects and Informed Consent”. It has been made clear to me that if I feel my rights are being infringed and / or my interests are being ignored, neglected or denied, I should inform the chairman of the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee who will undertake to investigate my complaint.

Signed: _________________________ Date: __________________

(Subject’s signature)

I certify that the details of the study have been fully explained and described in writing to ______________________, and this information has been fully understood by him.

(Subject’s name, printed)

Signed: _________________________ Date: __________________

(Independent witness’ signature)

Participant’s contact details:

Address (including postal code):

Home telephone number:

Mobile telephone number:

E-mail address:
APPENDIX C – Social support information sheet

Social Support

Social support is now believed to be a multidimensional construct involving structural, functional and perceptual dimensions.

**Structural Dimension – 4 Levels**

- Significant other network – Close friends, consist of 5 people.
- Exchange Network – Friends, teammates and coaches who routinely provide support – 20 people.
- Interactive Network – Those interacted with on a day to day basis. Large in size.
- Global Network – All the other unknown people in the environment.

**Functional Dimension – Types**

- Emotional Support – The belief that they are cared for and having the ability to turn to others in times of stress.
- Social Integration – Feeling of being part of a team or group with common interests.
- Esteem Support – The boosting of an individual’s self confidence.
- Firm Instrumental assistance – Tangible aid – Assistance of money or supplies.
- Information Support – Advice or guidance to overcome a problem.

**Perceptual Dimension**

Perception or appraisal of the amount and quality of the social support received to the individual
APPENDIX D – Example interview transcription

Interview Transcript

Female Participant 4

Date – 02/03/2009

Estimated rehabilitation period – 10 months approximately.

Stage of injury rehabilitation – Mid phase, about 5-6 months in.

Duration of Interview – 18.35 minutes.

Interview talking. Interviewee talking.

Do you have any questions so far regarding what we have spoken about?

No

If not, then we can proceed with the interview. As you can see from the copy of the interview guide, the interview comprises of a section on the demographic information regarding your injury, and three sections regarding the social support during the injury.

Here’s a sheet to show you the different social support types before we start if you could just look through them.

Ok.

Have you fully recovered from your injury now?

Um, no, I’m still kind of half way through, might be half, I’ve just started running

What is your current injury status?
Well I broke my ankle a few months ago, um and I’m just beginning to run now so

How long in total has the injury prevented you from training fully and competing?

Um, it’s been about 6 months now. Yeh.

Before you actually got injured how committed were you to your sport – that is, how many hours throughout a normal week would you spend training and/or competing in sport?

Um, I’d say that I was quite committed, because well I am an international as well so um, it’s quite important to me, um I probably train about, well we’ve got our UWIC training every Monday and Fridays, um so probably about 8 -9 hours.

How important to you is your involvement in sport?

Um. Really important really, it’s my life, um that’s all I do is play rugby, um yeh

Has this changed since you got injured?

Um well yeh just sort of I dunno, kind of expiring from well from the rugby scene really, just, It just kind of depresses me so much that I can’t, that I am not able to play.

Since your injury, has your commitment to your sport changed in any way?

Um. I think I’ve kind of lost interest a bit because it’s been so long already. And it’s a bit. I just really want to get back playing I suppose.

Before the current injury, had you had any previous injury experiences?

Um. No.

Okay, I would like to move on now and ask some questions that relate to your social support experiences. If possible, take a few seconds and think about your situation before you got injured – these next few questions relate to your social support before you got injured.
Can you describe your ‘typical week’ both in terms of your sport commitment and also any other activities that you may undertake? If possible, try and remember what a ‘typical week’ was like before you got injured.

Um. Probably on a Monday I would do like an hour of weights, go to some lectures, um and then have training in the night. UWIC training. Um on Tuesdays, well either sprints or maybe weights again. Um then a Wednesday we’d then have a game or I have Welsh training in the evenings so it’s either one of those. Um Thursday either sprints or weights or a day off, depends if we had a game. Um Friday night then training again and either a game on Sunday or welsh training all day Saturday.

Which people (in that typical week) would you say that you were closest to within your sport?

Um, what, individuals within a team or?

Yeh.

Do you want names, or?

No just team mates or coaches..

Um, well team mates I suppose really, I see them quite a lot, all the time really yeh.

What about in your social life, is there anybody you would say you are close to that isn’t really involved in your sport? Such as Family, friends.

Um, I’m really close to my family, well my parents are really supportive um and I’ve got a boyfriend as well so I see him all the time really

Can you think back to what you have considered to be a significant problem (any problem) that you may have had before getting injured? And how do you think you coped with that problem?

Um, what with work-related or?

Anything, yeh?
Probably like coursework and stuff like that really, Uni work more than anything would worry me.

Would you say that you knew people that could help you with that problem?

Um, yeh I suppose, some lecturers yeh.

Can you give examples of certain people who helped you? (Sport and non-sport related)

Just lecturers I guess, when I got stuck on coursework, um and problems with sport, I suppose when I got, well I got picked to play scrum half at the under 19s a few years ago, um and I wasn’t, well I hadn’t had much experience at scrum half, and I was a bit worried about that, but the coach kind of helped me kind of prepare for it and help me through it a bit.

Could you have called on more than one person to help you?

Um. Yeh, I suppose. My family are always there and my boyfriends always helped me whatever kind of problems I’ve got really.

In relation to the different support types that you read earlier on, which people provided the various types of support for you?

Um, the emotional support I suppose again my boyfriend and some of my friends from home, um and then my, my parents really. Um information support would be my coach and then my lecturers on my coursework.

Do you think that the support you normally have has changed since being injured?

Um not really but I think I kind of look for some more support when I am injured, um I kind of look for my, well my parents help me a lot, and I think I kind of rely on them quite a bit. And again my boyfriend and my friends as well.
When examining social support and its influence on an injured athlete’s response, the literature proposes that the belief that support is available reduces the effects of stress by changing the way you view the injury situation. The next few questions will relate to the way you viewed the availability of social support when you were injured.

How do you feel the injury will affect you?

Um, what in the future?

Yeh, Do you think the injury will benefit you at all?

Um, I think I’ve learnt to appreciate rugby a bit more, um it might help me to be a stronger character, because I have to deal with it and it’s been quite traumatic really for you know for the few months I’ve not been able to play rugby. So.

If not, do you feel any harm or loss to you as a result of being injured?

Um, just I suppose missing out on so much from playing rugby and with my team mates and stuff like that I suppose. But yeh, missing out on goals as well, I was supposed to go to um well the developments, um competition in a few months and I think I’m going to miss that. So yeh.

Do you feel threatened by the injury?

Um. I suppose threatened in the sense that I might miss out on a place you know in the side when I eventually get fitter, so I think that’s quite a big issue. Um, I’m worried about getting back to how I was before my injury really.

Do you see the injury as a challenge to you?

Um, yeh definitely, it’s been really challenging, it’s been quite hard to cope with to be honest. Um yeh.
Initially, how did you think you were going to be able to cope with the situation?

Um, first of all I was just devastated really and I was, I just thought it’s a massive thing, and I’ve got so long to get ready, when I was on crutches, it felt like such a long way away but um yeh.

In relation to some of the stressful situations that you have suffered from the injured, can you tell me specifically how you felt about the social support that you thought was available to you to help you deal with these situations?

Sorry I didn’t understand that.

So in terms of the stressful situations, can you tell me specifically about the social support that helped you through it?

Um, what when I’ve been injured?

Yeh.

Like right at the start, just getting around when I was on crutches it was awful, I just felt like I had to rely on my boyfriend a lot, and I probably annoyed him a bit as well so I felt really guilty, kind of wanted him to take me places all the time um and then with my family as well, like my parents had to take me everywhere, when I was on crutches.

Is the support available what you want?

Er, Yeh I think I’m quite lucky, again with my parents are so kind of supportive, and they are very very um helpful in whatever and always back me up with whatever I do. Um.

Is there any other support that you need and are not receiving?

Probably the only thing, I dunno, I’ve got, now that I’ve seen my physio, because I’ve got Welsh physio and NHS physio so I do have enough support from them as well, information support.
Do you think that your belief that support was available changed the way you appraised your injury initially?

So knowing the support was there changed the way you thought about it?

Um, maybe knowing that someone is there to help me kind of lessened the impact of the um demand or whatever.

Do you think that your belief that support is available has changed the way you are coping with your injury?

Well knowing people are there to support me, um definitely helps, um, just having that reassurance really that they’re there to look after me.

Can you think of a certain aspect of when you were injured that you believed to be under your control?

Um, Just my rehab and generally how much work I put it, um it’s down to me at the end of the day to do the exercises and to do my stretches or whatever and just to get back as soon as I can

Is there any social support or help which helped specifically to help you then?

Um the physio definitely keeps me motivated, tells me you know um, kind of really guides me to what I’m supposed to be doing so I think the physios quite good yeh.

Can you think of a certain aspect of when you were injured that you believed to be out of your control?

Um, Um out of my control?

Yeh?
Um well just when I’m gonna be back playing really, because um even though I’m working really hard, it’s still quite a few weeks off to when I’m gonna be really back in.

Was there any social support helping you through that, specifically?

Not really, because it’s kind of out of my control, it’s out of their hands as well, just waiting for the injury to get better really.

The things people say and do for one another has been referred to as received support. This kind of support has been highlighted to reduce the effects of stress that some people may have In the following section, I would like to ask you a few questions on the social support that you actually received during your rehabilitation as opposed to what you thought was available to you.

What specific types of social support have you actually received during your injury?

Um, yeh well emotional support is from my family, friends and my boyfriends, um, social integration, um I haven’t really been socializing with my team that much, it’s been my choice really to kind of just step away a bit from the scene, because I just get so depressed watching all the time, and just fed up, I just had enough so, um esteem support, I suppose my parents are always there saying aww you know you’re lovely and whatever, just kind of make me feel a bit better and just say aww you know you’re a good rugby player, you’ll get it back when you come back and um, then money kind of financial in, well financial and stuff, um my parents again are really kind of supportive if I need any money, I’m not too worried about that, I feel a bit guilty asking the for money all the time, but they’re always there for me. And then information support, just again my physios have been quite good really. With this injury yeh.

Has the support you receive matched what you needed to cope with specific stressors? (for example, somebody to give you a lift in a car when you were incapacitated)
Yeh, it’s been kind of up and down really, at the start I found it really hard to kind of ask for lifts and stuff but I suppose my boyfriend just had to get used to it really and had to kind of cart me around for the whole time, but now I’m walking and a bit better, so I just, it’s a lot easier now that I’ve had, got independence back really, um but no I think I’ve had a lot of support do you know what I mean. I couldn’t of asked, I am really really lucky with that fact

Has the support you received change over time?

Um, I think a big thing now that I’m not on crutches, because people don’t really realize there is something wrong with you, is that I don’t think you get so much kind of asking how you are, I think because when you’re on crutches it is really obvious, you know what I mean, you can see that someone is having trouble and people are kind of opening doors for you, but now I’m kind of off the crutches and I’m still having pain in my ankle, it’s still quite difficult.

Are you satisfied with the support you are receiving?

Yeh I think so, right at the start I was a bit kind of concerned with the physio but now ts kind of well it’s because I can do more rehab I’m quite kind of satisfied with that and just my family and my boyfriends have been great.

How often do you receive the certain types of social support?

Well, emotional support is sort of every day really, all day every day. Um.

Not necessarily all of them, just the ones you’ve received?

Okay um and esteem my boyfriends always kind of making me feel better about myself. Um, yeh that’s about it really.
Have particular social support types been received for certain stressors that you have experienced?

Sorry can you say that again?

Have particular social support types been received for certain stressors that you have experienced?

Um. Um. Just kind of getting, at the start getting around, it was really difficult and um just being there for me, you know giving me practical, giving me lifts and stuff like that, that was a big one. Um.

Are certain types of support or providers more effective than others?

I think emotional support is really important because emotion, you know you go through such a big thing when you’re injured and I think you definitely need people there to kind of look after you and make sure that you’re OK, and I think that’s a massive thing in kind of rehab as well, you’ve got to keep motivated and keep doing your stuff.

Do you think you changed the way you normally cope with stress after receiving certain types of social support?

Um, I think it definitely helps, you know, it erm, definitely makes you feel less stressed or whatever, if there’s a problem, if you’ve got that support there you just don’t make such a big deal out of things, you kind of get on with it and think OK, come on, if there’s someone there saying come on, get on with it, it’s not such a big deal then.
Is there any type of support that you would say are the most effective toward dealing with your efforts to cope with your injury?

Um, I think informational support is definitely a big one, because you need to know kind of what you’re doing, um rehab wise, and I think that just increase your confidence then, if you think the physio knows what he’s talking about then you’re going to listen to them and you’re going to kind of adhere to like what they’re saying. Um but I definitely think that the emotional support is massive because someone always being there for you no matter what, I think it just beats everything really.

How do you mobilize your support?

Do you approach providers? Or do they approach you?

Um, with my family it’s a bit of both really, because they’re always kind of asking how I am, but it I need some more extra support or whatever; I will go and ask for it. And I will go and you know, seek some kind of advice or whatever, um and my boyfriend I think he looks after me quite well, because I’ve been injured, you know quite a lot now and he just knows how to deal with it as well, um with my team mates I think it’s a bit, with those that are actually injured now, I think they’ve got more sympathy for me and they know what I am going through so so I see them quite a lot but with some of my other team mates I feel a bit left out because they don’t really understand what we’re going through.

Can you give me examples of helpful and unhelpful support that you received?

Um, helpful, just practical stuff really, um getting places, my boyfriend take me to the hospital and physio appointments, um unhelpful support, um not really any unhelpful support. Just I think any support is d’you know, is nice, just with people showing that they care.
OK

I think that has covered all the questions that I had in relation to your injury. Is there anything that you would perhaps like to comment on at all regarding the interview?

No.

Is there anything at this stage that you would like to add to the interview that hasn’t been covered?

Um, no I don’t think so.

The next stage of the process is to transcribe this interview and check through for the accuracy. I will then send you a copy of the interview and if possible could you read through it and make sure that it is accurate and reflects how you felt about the injury process?

Yep.

If you then want to add or take anything out I can do that before progressing with the study.

Thanks very much.