

Female Athlete's Pain Coping Styles Based on a Personality Profile

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between personality traits and pain coping styles in female athletes. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) and the Sports Inventory for Pain (SIP) questionnaires were utilized. The BFI measures the five broad dimensions of personality: (O)penness to experience, (C)onscientiousness, (E)xtroversion, (A)greeableness and (N)euroticism. The SIP identifies what type of coping style an athlete uses to when in pain; the subscales are Direct Coping (COP), Cognitive Coping (COG), Avoidance, Catastrophizing (CAT), and Body Awareness. Profiles from the BFI were matched with the results from the SIP to determine if there is a predictive personality type associated with a specific coping style. The subjects were female softball players ($n = 30$), ages 18-45, who had a minimum 5 years experience and had sat out of a competition due to injury. An interesting find was that C and N are significantly ($p = .000$) inversely correlated ($r = -.620$). Only COG and CAT reached marginal significance at $p = .085$ and $p = .084$ respectively. Within CAT the C, A, and N dimensions were significant together at $p = .021$. Within COG the C, E, and A dimensions were significant together at $p = .019$. E was the only independently significant dimension at $p = .010$. Hence for COG being moderately low on conscientiousness, very high on extroversion and very low on agreeableness could predict this coping style. For CAT being very low on conscientiousness, moderately low on agreeableness and very high on neuroticism could predict a tendency for catastrophizing.