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Injuries resulting from sports and active recreation can cause extended absences from sport, psychological distress, and disruptions to personal identity for recreational athletes. Athletes who strongly identify with their sport are more likely to continue participating post-injury. However, serious injuries can significantly impact their self-worth and emotional well-being (Andrew et al., 2011). Although biomedical management primarily addresses physical healing, there is limited understanding of how athletes narrate their recovery experiences and how personal stories influence rehabilitation and well-being. These effects often extend beyond sports, influencing daily life and personal relationships. For many athletes, the experience of injury becomes a deeply emotional narrative (Sparks & Smith, 2003). Gaining insight into these narratives is essential for enhancing patient-centred care, fostering therapeutic relationships, and developing more holistic rehabilitation strategies. An autoethnographic approach offers unique opportunities to explore these lived experiences, as it allows the athlete-researcher to reflect deeply on personal emotions, identity shifts, and interactions during recovery. In this study, I aim to present autoethnographic exploration of my own experience of recovering from a serious cycling injury in triathlon using Frank's (1995) framework of Chaos, Restitution, and Quest. I examine how these narrative types evolved throughout my recovery and whether interactions with healthcare professionals, societal expectations, and personal beliefs influenced the shifts in these narratives, as well as the emotional and social dimensions of the rehabilitation process. Data are collected from my reflective journals, training logs, and memories of healthcare encounters gathered throughout the recovery period. A deductive thematic analysis will be conducted, using Frank's narrative categories as a framework to identify and interpret key themes. Preliminary findings will be presented along with comments on my analysis experience. Attendees will gain insight on the biopsychosocial complexities involved in recovering from a serious injury and the importance of narrative-sensitive approaches in healthcare, coaching, and sports rehabilitation.

Keywords

serious injury, restitution, chaos, quest, recovery, triathlon, autoethnography

References

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