INPLASY

Psychological characteristics of elite athletes: A literature review protocol

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

$\mathcal{R}$eview question / Objective What are the psychological characteristics of elite athletes?

Background Understanding the psychological characteristics of elite athletes can inform practices in education, business, and mental health by translating high-performance mindsets into broader societal benefits.

Rationale There is growing evidence on the psychological characteristics of elite athletes. A number of systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and scoping reviews have been conducted on specific psychological characteristics of elite athletes [e.g., 1-3] but there is a knowledge gap in relation to integrated evidence on the topic. An overview of reviews can help provide a more complete understanding through a summary of the evidence.

METHODS

Strategy of data synthesis The following electronic bibliographic databases will be searched from inception to May 2025: Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Web of Science, Embase, Scopus, ERIC, PsychINFO, and PubMed; SportDiscus will be a subject-specific bibliographic database. Targeted searches will be conducted in Google Scholar.

Eligibility criteria Elite athletes, as defined by a participant classification framework [4], will be eligible for this review with no exclusions based on age, gender, or ethnicity. Eligibility criteria for review selection will follow overview of reviews guidance [5], including the PICOS framework where relevant.

Source of evidence screening and selection One reviewer will be involved in identifying reviews (published systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and

scoping reviews) for screening through database searching, and removing any duplicate records. Electronic bibliographic databases detailed in Strategy for Data Synthesis will be searched. Reference lists of identified reviews will be screened for other potential eligible reviews and review authors will be contacted if a review cannot be accessed. Titles and abstracts will be screened for eligibility independently by two reviewers (one with knowledge in the review topic, and the other with methodological expertise) and full-text reviews will be retrieved if deemed potentially eligible. The two reviewers will then carry out full-text reviews independently, any disagreements for inclusion/ exclusion will be resolved by consensus.

Data management The GRADE system [6] will be used as part of the Data Management process. Given the overall objective is to identify psychological characteristics of elite athletes, quality assessment scores and risk of bias analysis will not be used when aggregating the characteristics reported in the overview of reviews.

Reporting results / Analysis of the evidence The factors most relevant for the proposed review include mental health, motivation, confidence, resilience, self-regulation, and mental training.

Presentation of the results Narrative summary.

Language restriction Only reviews published in English will be considered for inclusion.

Country(ies) involved United Kingdom.

Keywords Elite athlete; Psychological characteristics.

Dissemination plans A report summarizing the findings will be prepared and published under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

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