

Dual Careers for Mental Health (DC4MH)

NATIONAL REPORT WP1

Mental health in Spanish student-athletes, non-student athletes, and non-athlete students.

Rocío Zamora-Solé^{1,2}, Maximiliano Devoto^{1,2}, Susana Regüela^{2,3}, Xavier Balius³, Yago Ramis^{1,2} and Miquel Torregrossa^{1,2}

1 Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

2 Institut de Recerca de l'Esport (IRE), Spain.

3 Centre d'Alt Rendiment Esportiu de Sant Cugat, Spain

Table of contents

- Data collection in Spain
- Participants
- Results of the Spanish DC4MH Survey
 - Mental Health
 - Dual Career experiences
 - Mental Health Literacy
 - Resilience
 - Mental ill-health
 - Life satisfaction
 - Impact of COVID-19
 - Relationship between study constructs
- Next steps
 - Applied recommendations
 - Next steps in DC4MH project

Data collection in Spain

Two phases of data collection were performed at the High-Performance Centre (HPC) of Sant Cugat (i.e., May-June and September-November 2021) taking in consideration both academic and athletic calendars to increase the number of participants involved (see Figure 1). Specific services of the HPC (i.e., the Athlete Support Services) were in charge of the dissemination of the link of the survey in order to invite athletes and student-athletes of the Centre to participate in this study.

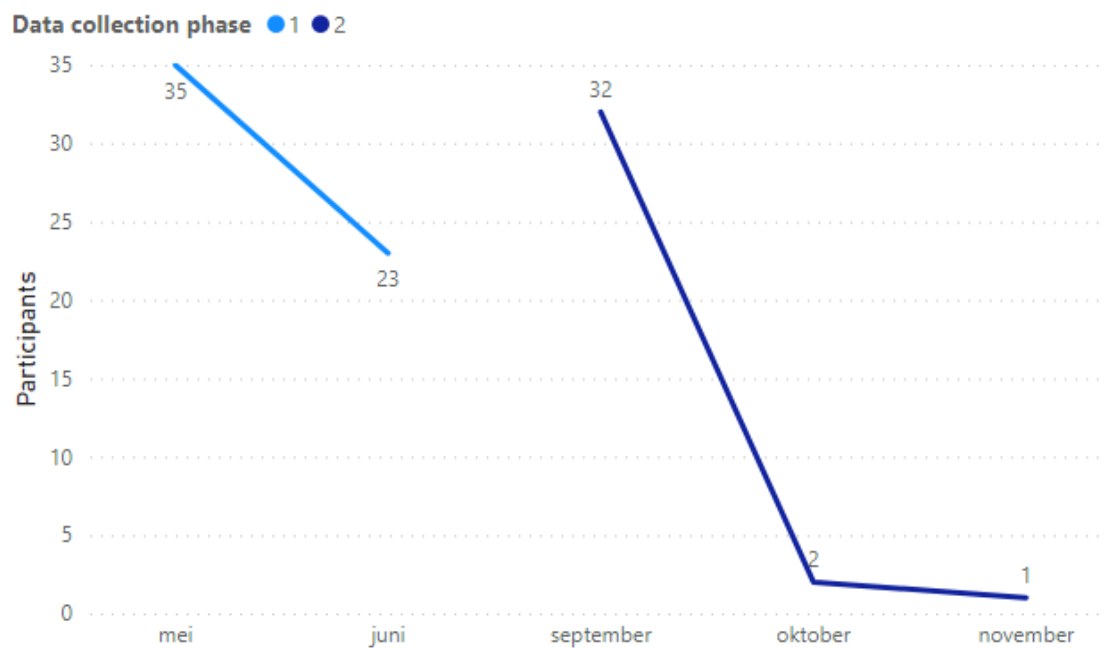


Figure 1
Spanish data collection phases

Participants

The full sample (N=93) is composed by student-athletes (DC Sports & Education= 94,6%; DC Sports & Work= 2,1%) and athletes (N= 2, 1%) from the High-Performance Centre of Sant Cugat (HPC). This is an organization that supports athletes so that they can be competitive at international level, optimizing the highest technical and scientific quality resources. The HPC considers academic and personal development as equally important; therefore, they offer the needed services and tools for their development. HPC's athletes can attend to school (i.e., high school and compulsory secondary school) at the educational institute located at HPC's facilities. There is also a residence service available for athletes that live far away from their training Centre or require this facility. The HPC is a public entity and as such is regulated by the General Secretary of Sport from the Catalan Government—a General Secretary that has a financing agreement with the Spanish Sports Council. The HPC has its own organizational autonomy, and it is organized into two areas: (a) Administration and (b) Sports. This last area is the one responsible of the high-performance sport topics and is divided into four areas: (a) Science, Medicine, and Technology, (b) Education, (c) Sports and (d) International Relations and New Developments.

Participants Description

The Spanish sample is composed by 45% of female student-athletes and athletes (see Figure 2). Most of the participants (63%) were 18 or older at the time of the survey (see Figure 3).

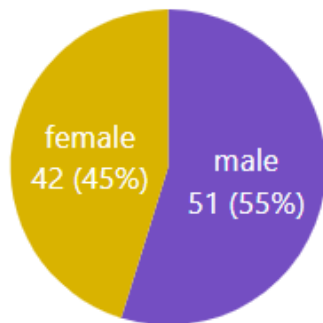


Figure 2
Gender distribution of the sample

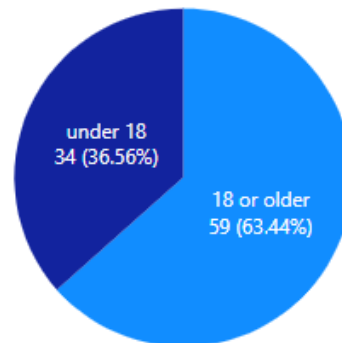


Figure 3
Age distribution of the sample

The Spanish athlete sample (N= 92) is formed by a majority of individual sport athletes (see Figure 4). From a sporting level perspective, 58% of the participants compete at an international level, 29% at national level, 11% at Olympic/Paralympic level and 2% at regional level (see Figure 5).

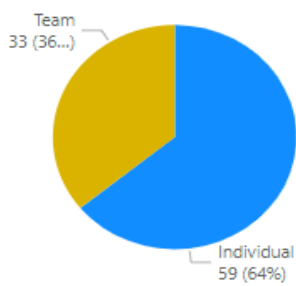


Figure 4
Distribution by type of sport

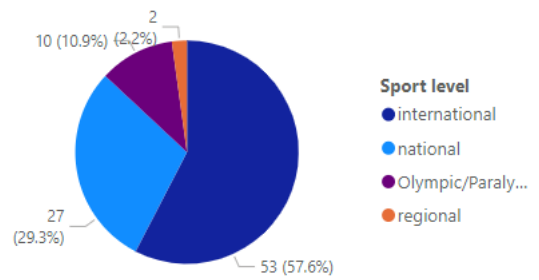


Figure 5
Distribution by sporting level

The Spanish student-athlete sample (N= 92) is composed by a higher percentage of students at a secondary level of education (60%) rather than higher education (see Figure 6).

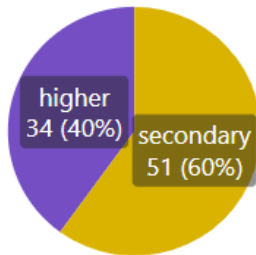


Figure 6
Distribution by academic level

Results

Dual Career Experiences

The Dual Career Experiences questionnaire presents various experiences that student-athletes can have in their dual careers. For each of those statements, participants are asked to indicate how often they experience them.

Our results (see figure 1) show that the Spanish student-athletes that took part in the survey have overall satisfactory DC experiences. Specifically, they perceived high levels of development of their dual career competencies, such as, the ability to manage priorities, have balance in their lives and have a holistic development of them as persons. However, they perceived the need of improvement in their competencies of career planning and the development of long-term security.

Furthermore, they perceived fewer negative experiences (e.g., very low financial pressure) in comparison with the European average, and they felt supported, mostly by their family, friends, and coaches, but also from their sport environment and school.

These results can be understood when considering the philosophy of care and the variety of services provided by the HPC to facilitate the combination of sport and studies/work.

Dual Career Experiences (items 13-18 are negatively worded)

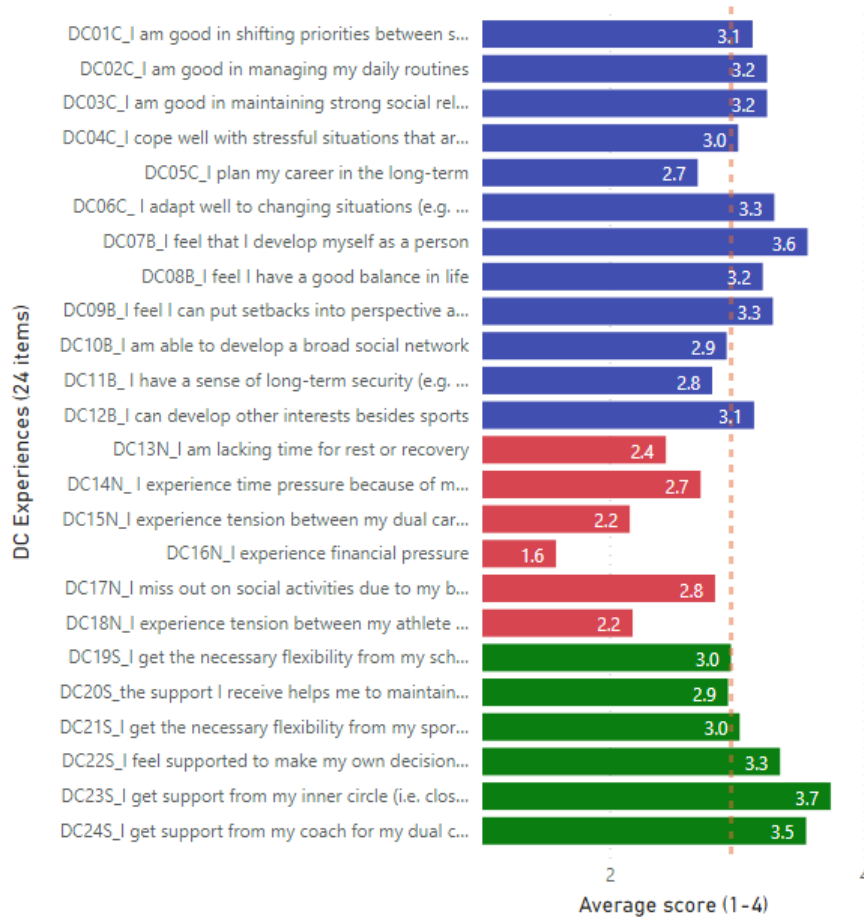


Figure 1

When considering gender differences in the dual career experiences (see figure 2), our results show similar experiences in both female and male student-athletes.

DC Experiences factor scores between gender

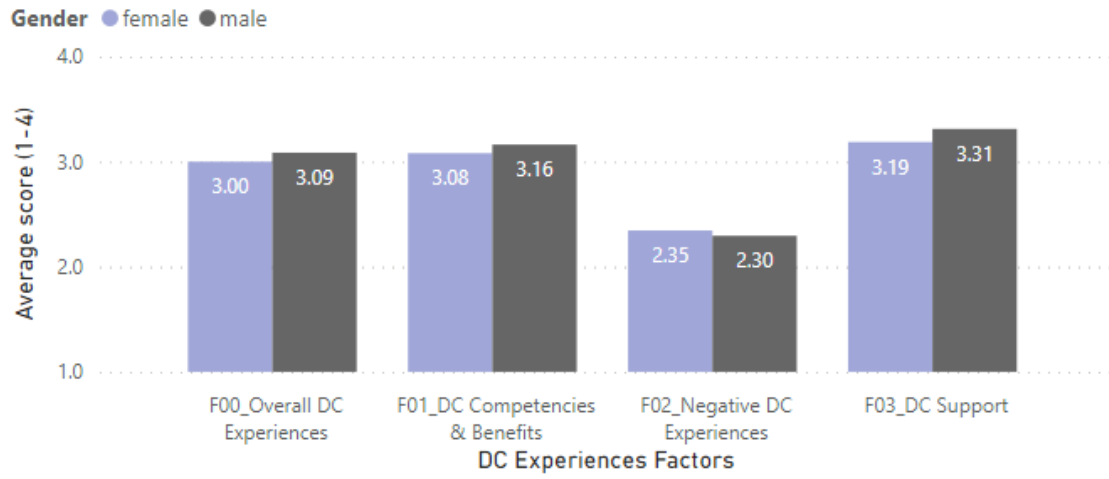


Figure 2

Mental Health Literacy

To gain an understanding of the knowledge of the participants about various aspects of mental health, different statements (e.g., *If I had a mental health problem, I would try to hide it from others*) were presented and participants were asked to indicate to which extent they agreed with each one of them.

Our results (see figure 3) show that Spanish student-athletes present a high predisposition to seek for help if needed and low levels of mental health stigma when compared with the consortium average. Moreover, Spanish athletes view medical and mental health as equally important.

MH Literacy items scores

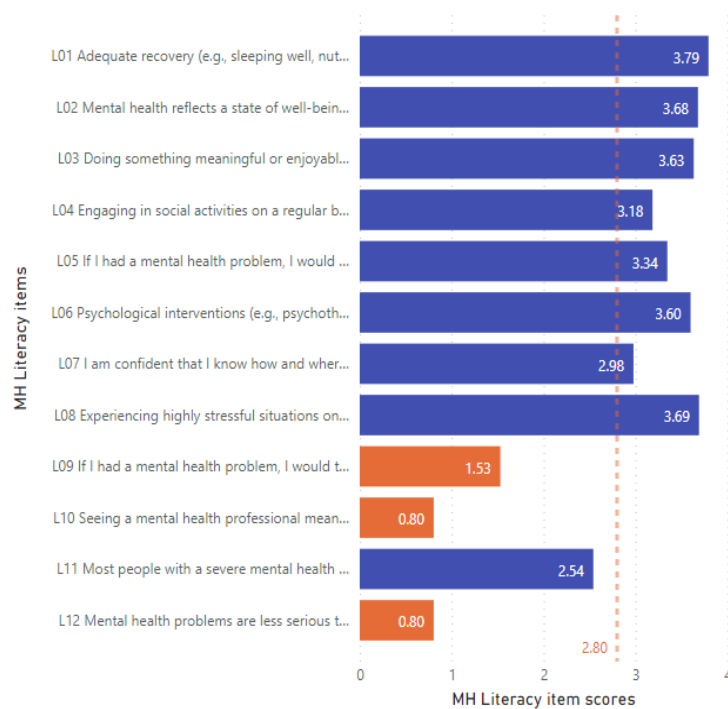


Figure 3

Resilience

Different statements related to the approach participants took in front of the different challenges they could encounter in their dual careers were presented; participants were asked to indicate how true these statements were for them.

Our results (see figure 4) show that Spanish student-athletes perceived they had the capacity to bounce back from their problems, emphasizing their ability to adapt to changes, injuries and/or failures.

Resilience: CD-RISC10 avg scores (scale 0-4)

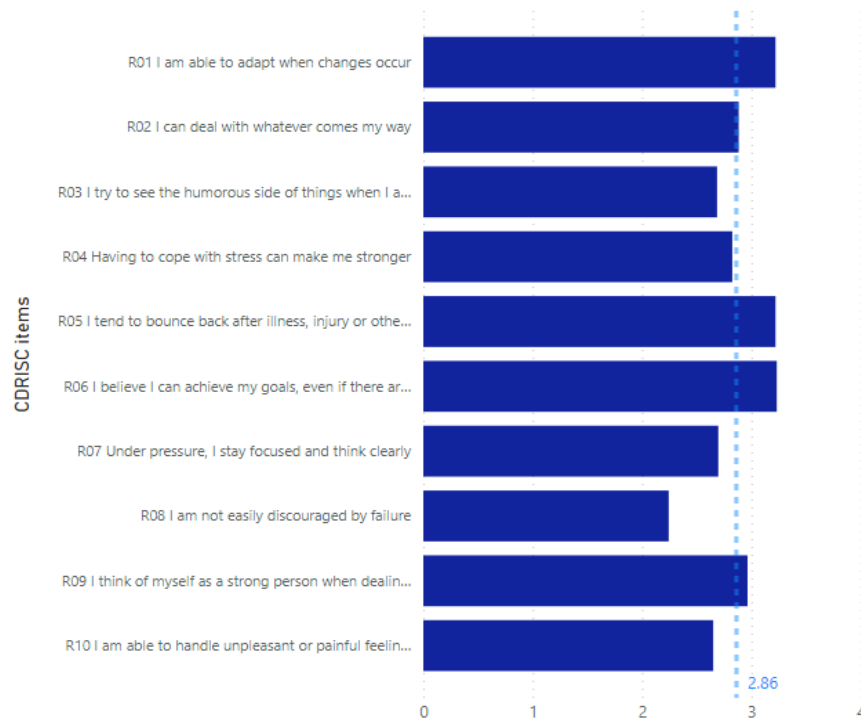


Figure 4

Mental Ill-health

Participants were asked if they had ever been diagnosed with a mental health problem or if they had ever received professional attention in relation with their mental health.

Our results show that most of the participants had never been diagnosed with a mental health problem (see figure 5).

Have you received a diagnosis for MH problem?

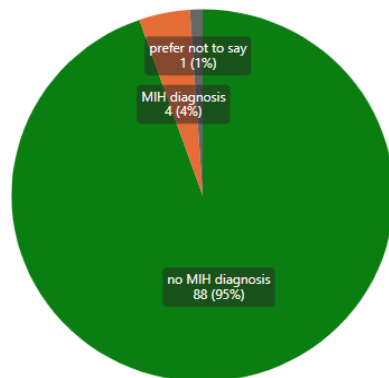


Figure 5

In line with previous results regarding the help seeking attitudes, half of the sample had received professional attention in relation with their mental health (see figure 6).

Have you received help from a professional in relation to your MH?

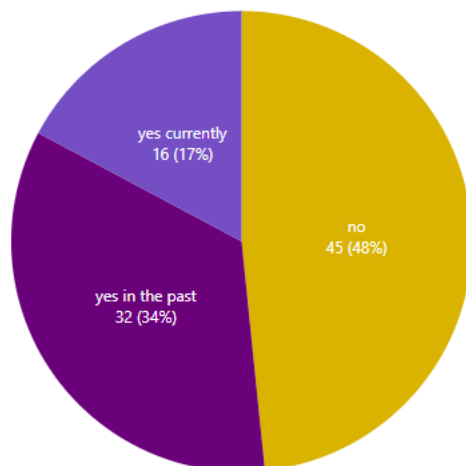


Figure 6

Life satisfaction and impact of COVID-19

To explore life satisfaction about the different domains of their lives, participants were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with different aspects such as, their sleep, nutrition, financial situation, amongst others.

Our results (see figure 7) show that the Spanish student-athletes that took part in the study felt satisfied with the different aspects of their lives. Specifically, they valued higher their sports satisfaction rather than their academic or social domains. When comparing Spanish results with the consortium average, an increased level of satisfaction can be found in the combination of sport and studies/work. In contrast, Spanish athletes valued lower their mental health and financial satisfaction in comparison with the consortium average.

HMQ: avg satisfaction about life aspects

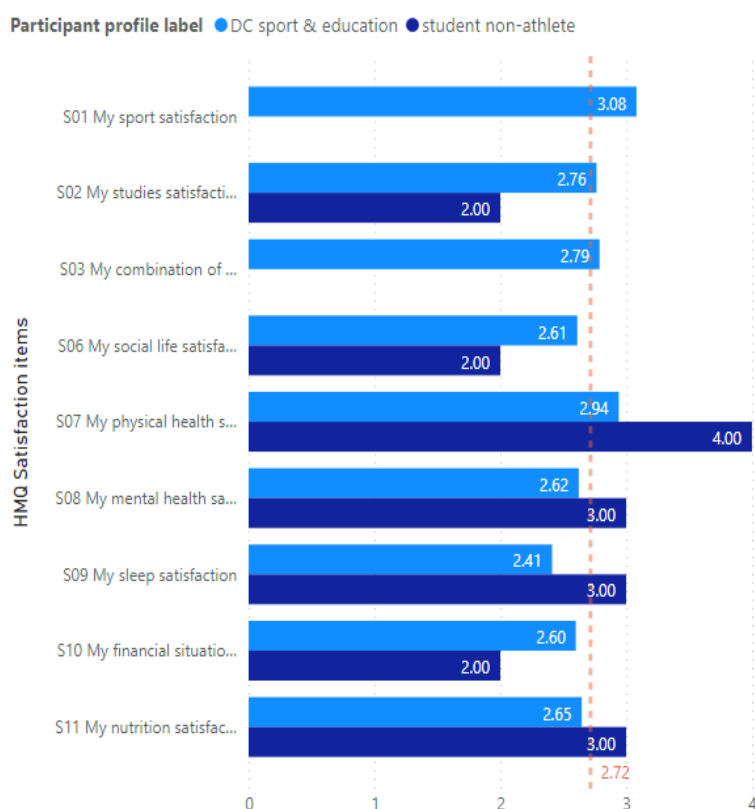


Figure 7

Conclusions

The more revealing results of the study show that Spanish student-athletes and athletes that took part in the survey present:

- High levels of satisfaction with their dual careers.
- Positive predisposition towards asking for help when in presence of mental health problems.
- Low levels of stigma towards mental health.