

Is perceived autonomy support provided by a coach related to the frequency of injury preventative behavior among elite golfers?

Research has shown that perceived autonomy support can have an indirect effect on behaviors via autonomous motivation (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2015). This indirect effect has, for example, been found in relation to injury preventative behaviors within sport (Chan & Hagger, 2012). Overuse and acute injuries are a common problem among golfers (McHardy & Pollard, 2005) and exploring factors that might increase the frequency of preventative behaviors is warranted. The aim of the study was to investigate if perceived autonomy support from the coach has an indirect effect on the self-reported frequency of injury preventative behaviors via the level of autonomous motivation. A total of 59 elite golfers, (handicap  $M=-1.2$ ,  $SD=4.9$ , age  $M=21$ ,  $SD=5.5$ ), completed a questionnaire with questions related to autonomy support from the coach, autonomous motivation for injury prevention, and the frequency of five injury preventative behaviors (e.g., how often do you ask for advice about injury preventative exercises, how often do you train to improve your physiological status). A mediation analysis, using Hayes (2012) process macro in SPSS 20.0, was performed. The results showed that perceived autonomy support and autonomous motivation could explain 45% of the variance in the frequency of preventative behaviors,  $F(1,56) = 22.71$ ,  $p < .001$ . The result showed that perceived autonomy support had a statistically significant positive indirect effect on the frequency of preventative behaviors via autonomous motivation ( $ab = .16$ , 95% CI = 0.05-0.34,  $p < .05$ ). Based on the results, coaches should consider giving feedback that supports autonomous motivation among golfers when aiming to encourage injury preventative behavior. Injury prevention programs should include strategies to improve the athlete's autonomous motivation to carry out preventative activities. Future research should investigate the relationship between estimated and the objective frequency of injury prevention behavior.