The Social Determinants of Athletes' Health: Health and High Performance?

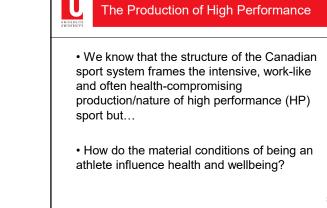
YORK

VERSIT

YORK

redefine THE POSSIBLE

Parissa Safai (York University), Jean Harvey (University of Ottawa) and Philip G. White (McMaster University)

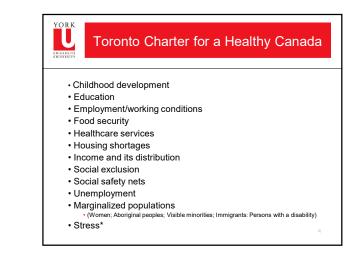


YORK

	Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)
 The economic and social factors that influence the health of individuals and communities as a whole 	
	• "Healthoriginates to some degree in the

character of socioeconomic relations"
The quantity and quality of a variety of

• The quantity and quality of a variety of resources that are made available to members of a society



The Healthfulness of Sport?• Mixed methods

• Qualitative: exploring athletes' lived experiences in relation to SDOH and the production of HP sport

• Quantitative: studying incidence of compromised health

- Survey informed by Toronto Charter
- Distributed electronically and by hard copy

Limitations

YORK Survey Questionnaire Data • 56.8% women, 43.2% men • Age: 20.5% < 20 years, 48.4% between ages 20-29, 21% between 30-39, 10.1% > 40 years • 61.6% single or never married • 86.2% lived in urban communities 42.3% of respondents spent 20 to 29 hours per week on their sport · When asked if they are currently working, 83.1% of respondents said yes When asked why they were working, 71.1% said because of insufficient sport funding · Majority of our respondents (61.9%) did not receive AAP •Almost 41.6% of respondents estimated that their annual personal income (pre-tax) was less than \$20,000 yet 42.7% estimated that their total household income was more than \$80,000

YORK Themes from Qualitative Data 1. Health is relative and participation in HP sport remains health-compromising

- 2. Continued (often heavy) reliance on support system for material support support and the weight of participation in HP sport on the health of the supporters
- 3. Markedly middle- to upper-class background of athletes and their families
 - Stability in income and employment
 - Inaccessibility of HP sport ("uni-racial", "monolithic")
 - Middle-class ethos

*No, I was pretty healthy this year." • Dizziness • Low blood pressure • Eye infections • Chest infections and colds • "Stressed out" and emotional work • Litany of chronic/overuse injuries • "A full week focused on the body." • "If it's just a matter of arthritis, s/he will just keep doing [sport]."



YORK

U

Support Matters

"A lot of [my teammates] still live with their parents and so they have their parents' help. I think their parents are a bit more well off than me, so yes, they're going to have situations where they will have money issues but I think that their parents, because they're more well off, can help support them. Whereas because I am living on my own and my parents aren't as well off [pause] then it's more on me."

Support Matters (2)

"Debt is creeping up on me....l don't even know if I'll get [financial help] next year, we'll see how that goes [pause] but I think I should [pause] I hope. You know, it's <u>all</u> doubting and hoping and last minute decisions and things like that. Nothing's for certain in this world, nothing's secure. You can never feel secure, that's what kind of sucks. I think it's more of a security issue. If you feel more secure and you're not worried about other things, like financial issues, the health doesn't go. But if you're worrying about that, then the stress will definitely increase, for sure. And if you're working two jobs, you definitely have higher stress and you get sick because that's what happened to me."

The Health of the Family

"Last summer, when [my son] got injured and there was a remote possibility that he would be out of his sport, the two of them [son and husband] went downhill mentally. I noticed it. It was not pleasant around here. Neither one of them were prone to bad moods and they were both...[indicates downward with her thumb]. It was depressing around here last August and September. I think the health of the family is greater being involved in speed skating than it would be if we were not involved. I really do think that."

YORK

Stable and "Still Stretched"

"Considering that we are both well-educated adults with great jobs, we are stretched to the absolute maximum...I think sheltering, clothing, feeding, training costs, coaching costs, ice costs, whatever your sport, is totally impacted by whether your parents can afford it or not when you're at this age. I think it precludes kids who have less money. It doesn't matter about funding."

Parents' Voices

YORK

U

"We arrange our lives around her sport." "We do it happily because she loves it." "We can afford the time."

"We do it happily but when you are a oneincome family, a single parent...it's pretty hard. Usually, one-income families don't do competitive sport."

"You won't see recent immigrants. They don't have the finances and they don't have the information."



