Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: How does competitive culture in youth football influence seeking help for mental health among young male footballers?

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Project abstract:

Adolescent boys who play competitive football may avoid seeking mental health support because of cultural pressures that affect how they ask for help, as shown in research (Sheikh et al., 2024). This study aims to examine how competitive football culture affects help-seeking for mental health among young males with hope to guide them better support. The study will use a questionnaire with male players aged 11 and 21 from British schools, local teams and academies. People who take part will answer questions about their football environment, pressure , and views about getting mental health support. Responses will be analysed to find patterns between competitive culture and willingness to seek help. Findings could help coaches, clubs, and sport organisations understand how competitive environments affect young players' decisions to ask for support. This could help build healthier team cultures, reduce stigma around male mental health, and improve support for youth footballers. It will also add to current knowledge by showing whether competitive sport culture itself influences help-seeking, which is still under-researched in young male athletes.

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How does competitive culture in youth football influence seeking help for mental health among young male footballers?

Data description

What data will you create?

The research will collect quantitative and potentially qualitative data through an anonymous online questionnaire investigating mental health struggles and help-seeking behaviours among boys and young men involved in youth football teams. The questionnaire will explore participants' experiences of mental health, perceived pressures within football, attitudes towards seeking support and factors that may prevent them from discussing mental health difficulties.

The data will be collected using an online survey, with approximately 50–100 participants recruited through youth football teams, subject to recruitment feasibility and ethical approval. Quantitative data will consist of responses to closed questions and rating scales, while qualitative data may consist of optional written responses to open-ended questions. No clinical measurements, medical records, electronic health records, biological samples or images will be collected.

The questionnaire will be administered using Microsoft Forms or another university-approved online survey platform. Data will be exported into Microsoft Excel in CSV or XLSX format for organisation and analysis. Quantitative responses will be analysed using descriptive statistics, while any qualitative responses will be reviewed and grouped into relevant themes where appropriate.

The data will be stored securely using University of Nottingham-approved storage, with access restricted to authorised members of the research team. The questionnaire will be designed to avoid collecting identifying information, such as participants' names, email addresses or football team details that could identify individuals. As participants may be under 18, appropriate safeguarding procedures, informed consent arrangements and ethical approval will be established before data collection begins.

CSV files provide a widely used format for long-term accessibility and data sharing, while XLSX files allow more detailed organisation and analysis. Any data shared outside the research team will be anonymised and handled in accordance with university guidance, ethical approval and applicable data protection requirements. Data retention and deletion will follow University of Nottingham policies.

Data collection / generation

What are your methodologies for data collection / generation? How will you ensure data quality? What data standards will you use?

Data will be collected through a standardised anonymous online questionnaire distributed to participants through youth football teams, following university ethical approval. The questionnaire will include closed questions and rating scales to collect quantitative data on mental health experiences, pressures within football and attitudes towards seeking support. Optional open-ended questions may also be included to collect qualitative data about participants' experiences and perceived barriers to accessing mental health support.

All participants will receive the same questionnaire to ensure consistency in data collection. The questionnaire will be piloted before distribution to identify unclear wording, technical issues and questions that may be interpreted differently. Participation will be voluntary, and appropriate informed consent procedures will be followed. Where participants are under 18, the required consent and safeguarding procedures will be established in accordance with university ethical guidance.

Responses will be collected through a university-approved online survey platform, such as Microsoft Forms, with settings configured to avoid collecting identifying information. The data will be exported into CSV or Excel format and stored securely on University of Nottingham-approved storage. Quantitative data will be checked for missing responses, duplicate entries, invalid values and inconsistencies before analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, will be used to summarise questionnaire responses. Any optional written responses will be reviewed and grouped into common themes using a consistent approach.

Data quality will be maintained through standardised question wording, consistent response options and clear inclusion criteria. The questionnaire and data-processing procedures will be documented, including any changes made following pilot testing. A data dictionary will be created to define variables, response categories and coding procedures. Data cleaning decisions and analytical methods will also be recorded to support transparency, reproducibility and consistency. Where appropriate, the analysis and interpretation of results will be reviewed with the research supervisor.

As the research concerns mental health and may involve participants under 18, additional care will be taken to protect participant confidentiality. The questionnaire will not request names, email addresses or other unnecessary identifying information. Survey settings will be checked to prevent the automatic collection of identifying details wherever possible. Data will be stored in password-protected university systems, with access restricted to authorised individuals. Any exported datasets will be checked for identifying information before analysis or sharing. Participants will be informed about the voluntary nature of the study, how their data will be used, the limitations of anonymity and where they can access appropriate mental health support. All data collection and processing will follow the approved research protocol, university policies and applicable data protection requirements.

Data storage and security

Where and how will data will be stored, backed-up, transferred, and secured during the active phase (short to medium term) of research? When and how will you delete the data once the project is completed?

All research data will be stored securely using University of Nottingham-approved storage, such as the university's Microsoft OneDrive or SharePoint. Questionnaire responses will be collected through a university-approved online survey platform, with settings configured to avoid collecting names, email addresses or other identifying information wherever possible. Data will be exported into CSV or Excel format for analysis and stored in a password-protected university account, with access restricted to the student researcher and authorised supervisors where necessary.

Data management, documentation, and curation

What are your principles, systems, and major standards for data management and creation? What metadata and documentation will you keep?

Data will be collected using a standardised anonymous online questionnaire to ensure consistency. All data will be managed in line with University of Nottingham guidelines and data protection laws.
A data dictionary will record what each question measures and how responses are coded. I will keep copies of the questionnaire, participant information, data collection methods and analysis process. Data will be checked for errors and stored securely using clear file names and common formats such as CSV and Excel. Findings will be presented anonymously to protect participants’ privacy.

Ethics & Privacy

Are there any ethical or privacy related issues associated with your data?

Yes. The research involves sensitive information about mental health and may include participants under 18. Ethical approval and appropriate consent procedures will be required before data collection. Participation will be voluntary, and the questionnaire will be anonymous, avoiding names and other identifying information. Data will be stored securely and only accessed by authorised individuals. Participants will be provided with information about mental health support services in case the questions cause distress.

Roles & responsibilities

Who will be responsible for managing data, data security, data quality, and data security both during the award and post-award?

I will be responsible for managing the research data, ensuring data security and maintaining data quality throughout the project. This includes collecting, storing, checking and analysing the data securely. I will follow University of Nottingham guidelines to protect participants' privacy during the research and after its completion.

IPR

Who will own the copyright and IPR of any data that you will collect or create? If you are planning to use existing data as part of your research, do any copyright or other restrictions determine its use?

The data will be collected by me through an original anonymous questionnaire. Copyright and intellectual property rights will be managed in accordance with University of Nottingham policies. No existing datasets will be used, and all questions will be original or appropriately referenced where necessary.