

Recreational runners' attitudes towards running-related injury prevention, self-management and the use of digital technology to prevent and self-manage injury.

Background

Recreational runners have a high prevalence of running-related injury (RRI). Injury prevention and self-management of RRIs using digital technologies such as websites and smartphone apps may be one way to keep runners participating in the sport and maintaining the positive health benefits.

Objective

To explore attitudes of recreational runners towards injury-prevention, self-management of RRI and digital methods to support RRI prevention and self-management.

Design

Four guided online focus groups were conducted via Zoom technology, recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Setting

Recreational running community in Wales.

Patients (or Participants)

13 recreational runners over the age of 18, selected from a subset of runners who had previously taken part in a survey mapping training and injury patterns of recreational runners in Wales. Participants who volunteered to take part in a focus group were contacted.

Assessment of Risk Factors

All participants advised regarding protection of anonymity and confidentiality of information shared during focus groups.

Main Outcome Measurements

Transcribed data were thematically analysed.

Results

Recreational runners reported to prevent and self-manage injury using a range of means (e.g. stretches, massage, strength training and cross training). Runners sourced information from the internet, physiotherapists, running peers and coaches. Participants reported finding online information overwhelming, expressing a distrust in the information. Facilitators for the use of digital platforms were the information evidence base, its trustworthiness and the ability to personalise the programme according to characteristics such as age, gender and injury history. Other factors potentially enhancing its uptake were simplicity, ease of use, accessibility and content (e.g. information on warm-ups, specific RRIs and examples of exercises for its prevention and management).

Conclusions

Recreational runners find online information about RRI prevention and self-management to be overwhelming, confusing and unreliable. Any future digital RRI prevention and self-management programmes should be simple to use while also providing evidence-based, reliable information and advice.