NEED ASSESSMENT

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Deliverable # 4.1 Sport Science University Students Needs assessment analysis

Editor

Panagiotounis Fotis, KETHEA, Greece

Co-editor

Angeliki Koutsoukou, KETHEA, Greece Hassandra Mary, University of Thessaly, Greece Hatzigeorgiadis, Antonis, University of Thessaly, Greece Theodorakis, Ioannis, University of Thessaly, Greece

Research team

Stalsberg Mydland Trond, ALARM, Norway Line Karlotte Staff-Poulsen, ALARM, Norway Sheehan Lisa, Coolmine, Ireland Ailish McDonald, Coolmine, Ireland Ascari Andrea, Centro di Solidarietà di Reggio Emilia, Italy Notari Giulia, Centro di Solidarietà di Reggio Emilia, Italy Torras Híjar Eduardo, Association Sport to live, Spain Rovira Font Maria, Association Sport to live, Spain Panou Niki, ARGO, Greece Ioakeimidou Maria, ARGO, Greece Papamakarios, Georgios, KETHEA, Greece Nicola Barbieri, UNIMORE, Italy Pighi Elisa, UNIMORE, Italy

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The role of Sport in Addiction Recovery

Play, feel, meet, live





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Aim

The RACE4LIFE project is dedicated to developing an innovative blended learning module specifically designed for sport science students, focussing on the application of sportbased interventions in Substance Use Disorders (SUD) recovery. Central to the success of this initiative is a comprehensive needs analysis, which will serve as the foundation for the module's design and development, ensuring that it meets the specific educational and professional needs of the target audience. The structured approach in the needs analysis phase is critical to laying the groundwork for a high-quality blended learning module. By focussing on a detailed understanding of student needs, selecting appropriate instructional models, and clarifying instructional objectives, the project team will develop a module that is not only academically rigorous but also closely aligned with the professional goals of sport science students.

The project team will define clear instructional objectives based on an analysis of the student's needs and the educational context. These objectives will provide a focused framework for the module, ensuring that it is both purposeful and aligned with the desired learning outcomes. A thorough assessment of the learning environment and the student's current knowledge and skills will be conducted. This assessment will enable the design team to create a module that builds upon the learners' existing competencies while addressing any identified gaps. The needs assessment will guide the identification of the specific skills and knowledge that are essential for students to effectively plan and deliver sport-based interventions in SUD recovery. The design team will then prioritise these skills and knowledge areas, ensuring that the module is comprehensive, relevant, and targeted to the student's professional needs. This alignment ensures that the module will effectively prepare students to apply sport-based interventions in the context of SUD recovery, meeting the specific demands of this challenging and important field.





Key Objectives

The needs analysis is structured around several critical objectives, each aimed at creating a robust and effective learning experience for students:

Designing and Conducting Questionnaires

The initial phase of the need analysis process entailed the development of comprehensive questionnaires designed to collect empirical data from sport science students. These questionnaires were meticulously crafted to assess students' current knowledge levels, learning preferences, and specific needs concerning sport-based interventions in SUD recovery. The data obtained from this process will be instrumental in shaping the module's content, ensuring that it is both relevant and effectively aligned with the learners' existing competencies and educational objectives. This approach aims to create a learning experience that is directly responsive to the specific demands and expectations of the students, thereby enhancing the module's overall impact and efficacy.

Interpreting and Identifying Student Needs

The subsequent objective involved a comprehensive analysis of the collected data to accurately interpret and identify the specific needs of the students. This analysis aimed to uncover gaps in the student's existing knowledge and skills, which are critical to address to fully prepare them for successful engagement with the module. By thoroughly understanding these needs, the module can be meticulously tailored to align with the student's learning objectives, thereby optimising their ability to apply sport-based interventions effectively within professional contexts. This targeted approach not only enhances the educational experience but also ensures that students are adequately equipped to implement these interventions in real-world settings.

Selecting Appropriate Instructional Models

An essential component of the needs analysis involves the careful selection of instructional models that are both pedagogically sound and aligned with the specific needs identified among the students. These instructional models will serve as the foundation for the teaching strategies employed within the module. By choosing models that effectively address the learning preferences and requirements of the students, the module will be better positioned to deliver content in a manner that optimises student engagement and enhances knowledge retention. This strategic alignment of instructional models with student needs is critical to ensuring that the module's learning objectives are not only met but also deeply internalised by the learners, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes in the application of sport-based interventions in substance use disorder recovery.



Methodology

This cross-sectoral study employed a rigorously developed needs assessment tool designed to explore the comprehensive requirements of sport science students in building their capacity to apply sport as a therapeutic intervention in SUD recovery. The primary objective of this study was to identify specific educational gaps and competencies essential for students to effectively contribute to the field of SUD recovery through sportbased interventions. By actively engaging students, the study aimed to capture a holistic understanding of the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to enhance their proficiency in this specialised domain of sport science. The findings from this study are intended to inform the development of a targeted educational module, aimed at equipping future sport science professionals with the requisite tools and understanding to effectively support SUD recovery through sport.

Following the back-translation process, the needs assessment tool (Appendix 1) was translated into both Greek and English. This method involved an initial translation of the tool into the target language, followed by a separate translation of the resulting text back into the original language. The purpose of this approach was to ensure the accuracy and equivalence of the translation, thereby maintaining the integrity and meaning of the original content across both languages.

Upon completion of the translation process, the needs assessment tool was uploaded to an online survey platform (<u>LimeSurvey</u>). The tool was then administered to sport Science university students, allowing for the collection of data essential to the development of a targeted and effective blended learning module.



Sample

The study encompassed a sample of 117 sport science university students, comprising 64 males and 53 females, with an average age of 21.2 years. The majority of the participants were in their second academic year (64.1%), followed by those in their fourth year (26.5%). Regarding their areas of specialisation or interest within the field of sport science, the students predominantly indicated **Athletic Training** as their primary focus (57.3%), followed by **Sports psychology** (42.7%), **Strength and Conditioning** (40.2%), and **Sports Nutrition** (36.8%).



Exercise Physiology Biomechanics Sports Psychology Sports Nutrition Strength and Conditioning Sports Medicine Sports Biomechanics Performance Analysis Rehabilitation Sciences Sports Management Athletic training Teaching Other





Results

Assessing Baseline Knowledge of SUD and the Role of Sport and Physical Exercise

The initial set of questions was designed to evaluate the sample's familiarity with SUD and its associated implications. Furthermore, the questions sought to gauge the participants' understanding of the role that physical exercise and sports play in the recovery process from SUD. This investigation is crucial for establishing a baseline of knowledge and comprehension within the target group, which will subsequently inform the development of instructional content tailored to address identified knowledge gaps. Such targeted content is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of the blended learning module.

When asked, "How familiar are you with SUD and its implications?" the data showed that 61.4% of respondents were only slightly to moderately familiar with the subject matter.



Similarly, in response to the question, "Rate your knowledge of the role of physical exercise and sports in SUD recovery," the majority of those surveyed reported being slightly to moderately familiar.



These findings underscore the need for instructional content that not only fills these knowledge gaps but also strengthens the learners' understanding and competence in applying sport-based interventions in the context of SUD recovery.





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Perceptions on the Role of Sport and Physical Exercise in Supporting SUD Recovery

The second set of questions was crafted to evaluate the perceptions of the sample regarding the role of sport and physical exercise in supporting individuals with SUD during their recovery process. These questions are intended to explore several critical areas that are essential to understanding the integration of physical activity into SUD recovery programs.

Perceived Role of Physical Exercise and Sports in SUD Recovery

Participants were asked: "Do you believe that physical exercise and sports can play a role in supporting individuals with SUD in their recovery process?" A significant majority of respondents (93%) either agreed or completely agreed with this statement. This question aims to assess the extent to which participants acknowledge the potential of sport and physical exercise as vital components in the recovery journey of individuals with SUD. By understanding participants' perceptions, we can gauge the recognition of these interventions as meaningful and integral parts of comprehensive treatment strategies.



Impact on Well-being and Quality of Life

Participants responded to the question: "Do you think incorporating physical exercise and sport into recovery programs can enhance the well-being and quality of life of individuals with SUD?". The majority of participants (95%) indicated agreement or complete agreement with this statement. The purpose of this question is to evaluate participants' views on whether incorporating physical activities into recovery programs contributes to improvements in the overall well-being and quality of life of those undergoing treatment for SUD. The responses to this question will help determine if such interventions are perceived as beneficial in enhancing the physical, emotional, and social aspects of recovery.



Collectively, these questions provide crucial insights into the perceived efficacy of sportbased interventions in SUD recovery. The data gathered from these responses will directly inform the development and refinement of training modules for sport science students. This will ensure that future practitioners will be well-equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate sport and physical exercise into SUD recovery programs. By aligning the training content with the recognised benefits of physical activity in SUD recovery, the module will better prepare students to contribute to holistic and effective treatment strategies.



Prioritisation of therapeutic factors in Sport-Based Interventions for SUD Recovery

The third set of questions was designed to evaluate participants' perceptions of the critical therapeutic factors influenced by sport-based interventions in the SUD recovery. Specifically, respondents were asked to rank various factors, assigning scores from 1 (indicating the most important factor) to 8 (indicating the least important factor). This ranking was intended to shed light on which components are considered most essential by the participants in enhancing the effectiveness of sport-based approaches within the context of SUD recovery.

The results revealed that the improvement of mood and mental health was identified as the most important factor, with 26.5% of participants ranking it as the top priority. This was followed by reducing substance use cravings and negative thoughts, which 18.6% of participants ranked as the second most important factor. The third most critical aspect, according to 15.9% of respondents, was fostering a sense of community and support. Additionally, empowering individuals to develop life skills was ranked fourth by 23% of the participants.

Further down the rankings, supporting individuals in rebuilding their social networks was identified as the fifth most important factor, with 20.4% of respondents ranking it in this position. Empowering individuals to change their addictive behavior was ranked sixth by 16.8% of participants. Finally, providing opportunities for goal-setting and achievement was ranked as the seventh most important factor, also by 20.4% of the respondents.

This data offers valuable insights into the priorities of those involved in SUD recovery, highlighting the perceived importance of mental health improvement, craving reduction, and community support in the success of sport-based interventions.



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Assessing Prior Training and Perceived Readiness in Applying Sports Science to SUD recovery

The fourth set of questions was designed to evaluate participants' prior training experiences, with a specific emphasis on their exposure to substance use disorder (SUD) recovery within the field of sports science. One key question posed was: "Have you encountered any coursework or training related to SUD recovery and sports science?" This question sought to determine the extent to which their previous educational experiences had integrated sports science principles into the context of SUD recovery. The results revealed that a significant majority, 87% of the participants, had never encountered any coursework or training related to SUD recovery and sports science any coursework or training related to SUD recovery and sports.

Furthermore, participants were asked to assess their perceived readiness to apply their knowledge in practical settings through the question: "Do you feel adequately equipped with the knowledge and skills to address the needs of individuals with SUD in a sports science context?" This question aimed to evaluate their confidence in effectively supporting individuals recovering from SUD using sport-based interventions, thus highlighting potential gaps in their training that the newly developed module could address. The findings indicated that the majority of participants (74%) either disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, suggesting a notable lack of confidence in their preparedness to apply their knowledge in this specialised area.



Assessment of Students' Needs for Capacity Enhancement in Sport-Based Interventions in SUD Recovery

The fifth set of questions in the survey was meticulously designed to evaluate the participants' needs for enhancing their capacity in the subject matter of sport-based interventions in SUD recovery. The primary aim of this inquiry was to identify the specific resources or forms of support that participants deemed necessary to deepen their understanding and proficiency in this area.

Participants were asked, "What resources or support do you believe would be beneficial in enhancing your comprehension of this topic?" The responses indicated a clear preference for practical, experiential learning opportunities. The highest-ranked resource, cited by 76.1% of participants, was **hands-on experiences**, such as internships or volunteer opportunities. This preference underscores the importance of experiential learning in bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application in real-world settings.

The second most valued resource, each endorsed by 57.3% of participants, were **guest lectures or seminars by experts** and **training in evidence-based practices** for integrating sport into SUD recovery programs. These responses reflect a strong desire among participants for direct engagement with experts and for learning opportunities that provide scientifically grounded methodologies, which are critical for effective practice in this field.

In third place, with 50.4% of participants expressing interest, were **networking opportunities with professionals working in SUD recovery** and sports science fields, as well as **peer support or discussion groups** focused on the topic. These preferences highlight the participants' recognition of the value of collaborative learning and professional networking in their ongoing education and professional development.



In addition to these resources, participants were also asked to specify whether particular areas within sports science required further exploration concerning SUD recovery. This question was designed to pinpoint specific knowledge gaps that could hinder the effective application of sport-based interventions in this context.

The top-ranked area for capacity building, identified by 72.6% of participants, was **psychological interventions and counseling techniques** tailored to support recovery through sports participation. This indicates a significant demand for knowledge in the integration of psychological support with physical activity as a therapeutic modality in SUD recovery.

Following this, 55.6% of participants expressed a need for more **information on exercise program design for individuals with SUD** and **sports psychology techniques for motivation and behavior change** in SUD recovery. These responses suggest that participants are keen to develop skills in creating specialized exercise programs and employing psychological techniques that enhance motivation and facilitate positive behavioral changes in individuals recovering from substance use disorders.



Overall, the findings from this assessment will be instrumental in shaping the educational content of the blended learning module, ensuring it is comprehensive, practical, and closely aligned with the specific needs and professional development goals of the participants. By addressing these identified needs, the module will be better positioned to equip sport science students with the essential skills and knowledge required to effectively contribute to SUD recovery through sport-based interventions.



Assessing Intention in Capacity-Building Initiatives on the Role of Sports in SUD Recovery

The sixth set of questions was designed to evaluate participants' interest and engagement in a capacity-building initiative focussing on the role of sports in SUD recovery. These questions specifically aimed to assess the following areas:

Interest in Further Learning

Participants were asked, "How interested are you in learning more about the intersection of sports science and SUD recovery?" This question sought to determine the participant's level of interest in expanding their knowledge about the integration of sports science principles in SUD recovery. Understanding this interest is crucial for identifying the participant's willingness to engage more deeply with this interdisciplinary field, which merges the benefits of physical exercise with SUD recovery strategies. The results indicated that 34.1% of participants found it "Moderately Probable" that they would pursue further learning, while a significant 60.5% rated their interest as either "Very Probable" or "Completely Probable."



Current or Previous Engagement in Related Activities

The question, "Have you previously or are you currently engaged in any activities or initiatives related to promoting physical exercise for individuals in recovery from SUD?" explored the extent of participants' involvement in applying sports science principles to support SUD recovery. This inquiry provided insights into their practical experience and ongoing commitment to this field. The results revealed that the majority of participants (88.5%) had never engaged in such activities, highlighting a potential gap in experience that may be addressed through targeted educational interventions.





Interest in Workshops or Training Sessions

The final question asked, "Would you be interested in participating in workshops or training sessions focused on this topic?" This question was designed to assess participants' interest in attending workshops or training sessions centered on the application of sports science in SUD recovery. Understanding their willingness to engage in further training is essential for designing educational programs that meet their professional development needs and enhance their capability to implement effective sport-based interventions in addiction treatment settings. The findings showed that 34.2% of the participants were neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing, while a substantial 60.5% expressed agreement or strong agreement with the proposition.



These findings provide a comprehensive overview of the participants' interests, existing engagements, and openness to further training, which are critical factors in shaping effective capacity-building initiatives in the intersection of sports science and SUD recovery.

Finally, approximately half of the survey participants expressed interest in receiving information about the implementation of a relevant seminar and provided their email addresses for further communication.



Conclusion

The needs analysis conducted within the context of sport-based interventions in Substance Use Disorder (SUD) recovery reveals critical insights that will guide the development of an effective and responsive learning module for sport science students. The structured approach, encompassing the design and analysis of questionnaires, has successfully identified significant gaps in students' existing knowledge, skills, and confidence regarding the integration of physical exercise and sports in SUD recovery programs.

The data indicates a clear necessity for targeted educational content that addresses these gaps. Notably, the findings highlight the importance of psychological interventions, exercise program design, and the integration of sports psychology techniques to motivate behavior change in individuals recovering from SUD. Additionally, the overwhelming interest in practical, experiential learning opportunities underscores the need for hands-on experiences, such as internships and volunteer work, to bridge theoretical knowledge with real-world application.

To enhance the efficacy of the proposed learning module and better prepare future practitioners, several recommendations are put forth:

Curriculum Development: The RACE4LIFE learning module should include comprehensive coverage of psychological interventions tailored to SUD recovery, along with advanced exercise program design and sports psychology techniques. This will ensure that students are equipped with both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to effectively contribute to recovery programs.

Experiential Learning: Incorporate practical components such as internships, fieldwork, and case studies within the RACE4LIFE learning module. These experiences are essential for students to apply their learning in real-world settings and develop confidence in their ability to support SUD recovery through sport-based interventions.

Expert Engagement: Facilitate guest lectures and seminars led by professionals with extensive experience in SUD recovery and sports science. Direct engagement with experts will provide students with valuable insights and current best practices, enhancing their learning experience.



Collaborative Learning: Establish peer support groups and networking opportunities that encourage collaborative learning and knowledge sharing among students. This will foster a community of practice that supports ongoing professional development in the field.

Workshops and Training: Develop workshops and training sessions focused on the application of sports science in SUD recovery. These should be designed to address specific areas of interest and need identified in the analysis, such as psychological support and exercise program design.

Continuous Feedback and Improvement: Implement a feedback mechanism to continuously assess the effectiveness of the learning module and make necessary adjustments. This iterative approach will ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and aligned with the evolving needs of both students and the field.

By implementing these recommendations, the learning module will be better positioned to equip sport science students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to effectively integrate physical exercise and sports into SUD recovery programs, ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for individuals in recovery.



Need assessment sport science university students

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) are treatable, chronic diseases characterized by a problematic pattern of use of a substance or substances leading to impairments in health, social function, and control over substance use. It is a cluster of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms indicating that the individual continues using the substance despite harmful consequences.

In this study, we would like to know your opinion about the role of sports and exercise programs in SUD recovery treatment, and the possibility of you improving your expertise in the area

Demographic						
Age						
Gender	M	ale	ferr	nale	Ot	her
Academic year/level	1st	2nt	3nd	4th	5th	More
	Exercise P	hysiology				
	Biomecha	nics				
	Sports Psy	chology				
	Sports Nu	trition				
	Strength a	nd Conditio	oning			
Area of enocialization (interact within sports science	Sports Me	dicine				
(Select all that apply)	Sports Bio	mechanics				
	Performan	nce Analysis	;			
	Rehabilita	tion Science	es			
	Sports Ma	nagement				
	Athletic tr	aining				
	Teaching					
	Other					

Questions				2	
How familiar are you with SUD and its implications?	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
	familiar	familiar	familiar	familiar	familiar
Rate your knowledge of the role of physical exercise	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
and sports in SUD recovery	familiar	familiar	familiar	familiar	familiar

Do you believe that physical exercise and sports can play a role in supporting individuals with SUD in their recovery process?	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
Do you think incorporating physical exercise and sport into recovery programs can enhance well- being and quality of life of individuals with SUD?	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree



Do you think engagement with physical exercise and sport can reduce relapse risk for individuals with SUD?	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree
	Reducing sub	ostance use	cravings and ne	gative thoug	ghts
	Improving m	ood and me	ntal health		
Which accepts of sport based interventions do you	Enhancing ov	erall physic	al health and fit	ness	
which aspects of sport-based interventions do you	Fostering a se	ense of com	munity and sup	port	
SUD recovery2/with 1 being most important and 8	Providing i	ndividuals	opportunities	for goal-	setting and
being least important)	achievement				
being least importanty	Empowering	individuals	to change their	addictive be	havior
	Empowering	individuals	to develop life s	kills	
	Supporting in	ndividuals re	e-building their s	social netwo	rk

Have you encountered any coursework or training related to SUD recovery and sports science?	Yes No			-	
Do you feel adequately equipped with knowledge and skills to address the needs of individuals with SUD in a sports science context?	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree

	Guest lectures/seminars by experts
	Online courses or webinars
	Hands-on experiences (internships, volunteer opportunities)
	Educational materials (books, articles, research papers)
What resources or support do you think would be	Peer support/discussion groups focused on this topic
helpful in enhancing your understanding of this	Access to research databases or literature repositories
topic? (Select all that apply)	Training in evidence-based practices for integrating sport into SUD recovery programs
	Networking opportunities with professionals working in SUD recovery and sports science fields
	Other (please specify)
	Exercise program design for individuals with substance use disorders
	Integration of sports-based interventions into existing SUD recovery programs
Are there specific areas within sports science that	Psychological interventions and counseling techniques tailored to support recovery through sports participation
you need more information in relation to SUD	Research on the effects of exercise on SUD recovery outcomes
recovery? (Select all that apply)	Evaluation of the impact of sports participation on overall well-
	being in individuals recovering from SUD
	Sports psychology techniques for motivation and behavior change
	in SUD recovery
	Social and community aspects of sports participation in promoting
	long-term recover
	Other (please specify)



How interested are you in learning more about the intersection of sports science and SUD recovery?	Not at all probable	Slightly probable	Moderately probable	Very probable	Completely probable
Do you previus/currently engage in any activities or initiatives related to promoting physical exercise for individuals in recovery from SUD?		Yes		No	
Would you be interested in participating in workshops or training sessions focused on this topic?	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Completely agree

If you want to be informed about the
implementation of a relevant seminar please
indicate your e-mail address
The date which you provide up in this form one no

The data, which you provide us in this form, are not given to third parties other than the partners of the RACE4LIFE project.

Your data will be kept until your consent is withdrawn. You have every right to withdraw your consent at any time by sending an e-mail to <u>fpanagiotounis@kethea.gr</u>











rtsportproject@gmail.com



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