



*Sport – respect your rights*

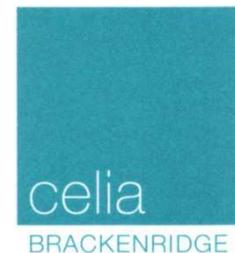
# **Harassment and abuse in sport: What research tells us**

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# Overview

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- Health warning
- Types
- Frequency
- Risks
- Knowledge summary and gaps



# Types

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- Wide variation in meanings
  - abuse, harassment, offending, exploitation, victimisation, **violence**, ...
- Non-accidental harm to athletes
- *'violence ... is never justifiable - violence ... is entirely preventable'* [Kofi Annan, 2006]
- Moral imperatives linked to human rights



## Types cont.

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- Discrimination - sex, race or sexual orientation
- Sexual violence (harassment and abuse) including rape
- Physical maltreatment:
  - Overtraining/forced exertion
  - Playing while injured
  - Peer aggression
  - Parental maltreatment
  - Doping/drug abuse
  - Alcohol abuse
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Bullying and hazing
- Neglect
- Child labour and trafficking



# Frequency

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- Scientific priorities from a review of sport literature (N=466 items)  
[Safe Sport International, 2014]
  - sexual harassment and abuse (undifferentiated) (n=132, 28%)
  - homophobia (n=86, 18%)
  - sexual harassment (n=58, 12%)
  - sexual abuse (n=49, 11%)
  - bullying (n=39, 8%)
  - hazing (n=39, 8%)

BUT ...

- Different studies measure different things

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- Canada:
    - 27% of female and male student athletes had experienced some form of sexual harassment [Holman, 1995]
    - 22% had experienced sexual intercourse with an authority figure in sport - 9% forced sexual intercourse [Kirby and Greaves, 1996]
  - Australia: [Leahy et al., 2002]
    - 31% of the female and 21% of the male athletes had experienced sexual abuse. Of these, 41% of females and 29% of males had been sexually abused within the sports environment
  - Denmark: [Toftegaard Nielsen, 2004]
    - 160 court cases about sport and sexual abuse
    - 2/3 of victims were boys (mean age 12 years)
    - Individual sport (71%) and recreational sport (90%)
    - All perpetrators were men but 37% of all sport coaches in Denmark are women

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- Czech Republic (coach/athlete relationships): [Fasting and Knorre, 2005]
    - slapped on the face, head or ears by a member of sport support staff (n=25, 11%)
    - had observed unwanted physical contact between a female athlete and her coach (n=62, 36%)
    - knew about any female athletes who had had a sexual relationship with their coach (n=169, 74%)
    - had heard rumours about sexual relationships between a female athlete and her coach (n=198, 86%)
  - Japan: [Kumayasu et. al, 2005]

Women sport/P.E. students much more tolerant in their perceptions of sexual harassment than their non-sport PE student counterparts

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- UK: [Alexander et al., 2011]
    - Online survey of 6,000+ UK students (aged 18–22 yrs) of their experiences of organised sport up to 16 yrs, and 89 telephone interviews
    - Some findings -
      - high levels of emotional harm (75%) – including humiliation, being sworn at, negative self and body image, and self harm
      - high levels of sexual harassment (29%)
      - peers the most common perpetrator
      - most said this negative culture was normal



# Risks

[Brackenridge, 2001]

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- Non-accidental acts - of omission or commission
- Arising from individual and/or cultural factors
- Always rooted in power relations
- Most often linked to gender
- Perpetrator risk factors – authority figures and athletes
- Organisational risk factors – both structural and cultural
- Elite sport - where potential gains and losses are greatest

# Knowledge summary

VICTIM	PERPETRATOR	
	Coach	Athlete
Coach	(Not studied)	Harassment, usually by males on females.
Athlete	Focus of research: mainly, but not always, male coaches but both female <i>and</i> male victims. Increased risk at elite level.	Major concerns emerging about bullying, hazing and homophobic discrimination.



# Knowledge gaps

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- Geography? [Hartill and Lang, 2014]
- Type?
- Victim status and gender relations? [Hartill, 2010]
- Policy effectiveness?
- Monitoring and evaluation !



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