

**General health complaints and sleep associated with new injury within an endurance sporting population: A prospective study.**

**Authors:**

R. Johnston<sup>a,i</sup>, R. Cahalan<sup>b,c</sup>, L. Bonnett<sup>d</sup>, M. Maguire<sup>e</sup>, P. Glasgow<sup>g</sup>, S. Madigan<sup>f</sup>, K. O’Sullivan<sup>b,c,h</sup>, T. Comyns<sup>a,c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, University of Limerick, Ireland

<sup>b</sup> School of Allied Health, University of Limerick, Ireland

<sup>c</sup> Health Research Institute, University of Limerick, Ireland

<sup>d</sup> Department of Biostatistics, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, Merseyside, United Kingdom

<sup>e</sup> Ulster Rugby, Irish Rugby Football Union, Kingspan Stadium, Belfast, N.Ireland

<sup>f</sup> Sport Ireland Institute, National Sports Campus, Abbotstown, Dublin 15, Ireland

<sup>g</sup> Irish Rugby Football Union, Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4, Ireland

<sup>h</sup> Sports Spine Centre, Aspetar Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, Doha, Qatar

<sup>i</sup> La Trobe Sport and Exercise Medicine Research Centre, School of Allied Health, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Australia

**Corresponding Author:**

Richard Johnston

Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, University of Limerick, Ireland.

Tel: +447874006506

Email: [Richard.Johnston@ul.ie](mailto:Richard.Johnston@ul.ie)

**Word count:** 3029

**Abstract word count:** 284

**Number of tables:** 2

**Number of figures:** 1

**Number of supplementary figures:** 2

1 **Abstract**

2

3 **Objective:** To examine the association between subjective health complaints, sleep quantity and new injury  
4 within an endurance sport population.

5

6 **Design:** Prospective cohort study.

7

8 **Methods:** Ninety-five endurance sporting participants were recruited from running, triathlon, swimming,  
9 cycling and rowing disciplines. Over 52-week period participants submitted weekly data regarding  
10 subjective health complaints (SHCs) (cardiorespiratory, gastrointestinal and psychological/lifestyle), sleep  
11 quantity, training load and new injury episodes. Applying a 7- and 14-day lag period, a shared frailty model  
12 was used to explore new injury risk associations with total SHCs and sleep quantity.

13

14 **Results:** 92.6% of 95 participants completed all 52 weeks of data submission and the remainder of the  
15 participants completed  $\geq 30$  weeks. Seven-day lag psychological/lifestyle SHCs were significantly  
16 associated with new injury risk (Hazard ratio (HR)=1.32; CI 95%=1.01-1.72,  $p<0.04$ ). In contrast,  
17 cardiorespiratory (HR=1.15; CI 95%=0.99-1.36,  $p=0.07$ ) and gastrointestinal (HR=0.77; CI 95%=0.56-  
18 1.05,  $p=0.09$ ) SHCs were not significantly associated with new injury risk. New injury risk had a significant  
19 increased association with 14-day lag  $<7$ hrs/day sleep quantity (HR=1.51; CI 95%=2.02-1.13,  $p<0.01$ ) and  
20 a significant decreased association with  $>7$ hrs/day sleep quantity (HR=0.63, CI 95%=0.45-0.87,  $p<0.01$ ). A  
21 secondary regression analysis demonstrated no significant association with total SHCs and training load  
22 factors (Relative Risk (RR)=0.08, CI 95%=0.04-0.21,  $p=0.20$ ).

1 **Conclusions:** To minimise an increased risk of new injuries within an endurance sporting population, this  
2 study demonstrates that psychological/lifestyle subjective health complaints and sleep quantity should be  
3 considered. The study also highlights a lag period between low sleep quantity and its subsequent impact on  
4 new injury risk. No association was demonstrated between subjective health complaints, sleep quantity and  
5 training load factors.

6

## 7 **1.0 Introduction**

8

9 Injury presents a significant health burden to sporting populations influencing both training and competition  
10 performance outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Systematic reviews show injury to be a common reason for endurance sporting  
11 populations (ESPs) to avoid, or adapt, training load.<sup>1, 2</sup> ESPs are a unique sporting population due to the  
12 diversity of disciplines undertaken (e.g. swimming, cycling, triathlon, running and rowing). With the  
13 current popularity of single and multidiscipline endurance events<sup>3</sup> it is important to consider the injury  
14 profile unique to ESPs' training and competition. Across these endurance disciplines, risk factors for injury  
15 are multifactorial and typically classified as extrinsic (factors independent of the athlete) or intrinsic (factors  
16 inherent to the athlete).<sup>4</sup> The complex and multifactorial aetiology of injury risk within ESPs and non-ESPs  
17 is reflected in Wiese-Bjornstal's sport injury risk model which identifies biological (e.g. nutrition), physical  
18 (e.g. training, competition), psychological (e.g. mood state, stressors) and sociocultural (e.g. social  
19 pressures) risk factors for injury.<sup>5</sup>

20 Thygesen et al<sup>6</sup> have defined subjective health complaints (SHCs) as self-reported health concerns which  
21 could reflect subjective feelings of being unwell or in distress as much as actual disease. The Subjective  
22 Health Complaints Inventory is a validated tool used to measure the occurrence and severity of SHCs in  
23 non-ESPs.<sup>7</sup> Previous studies<sup>6, 7</sup> utilising the SHCs inventory have categorised SHCs as cardiorespiratory  
24 (e.g. palpitations/ extra heart beats), gastrointestinal (e.g. diarrhoea), and psychological/lifestyles SHCs

1 (e.g. anxiety). A high prevalence of cardiorespiratory SHCs (30-61%),<sup>3, 8</sup> gastrointestinal SHCs (65-84%)<sup>8</sup>  
2 and psychological/lifestyle SHCs (26-68%)<sup>9</sup> have been reported within ESPs and non-ESPs.  
3 ESP and non-ESP studies have demonstrated that SHCs may negatively impact upon training load.<sup>3, 7</sup> A  
4 recent study of 7000 distance runners<sup>3</sup> found those who reported cardiorespiratory SHCs before an  
5 endurance race were 2–3 times less likely to complete the race. They also found a decrease in training load  
6 for 2–4 days following recovery from a cardiorespiratory SHC.<sup>3</sup> Another study of 30 triathletes found that  
7 psychological/lifestyles SHCs, such as depressed mood and sleep disturbance, had a greater impact than  
8 training load factors on injury incidence.<sup>10</sup> Due to the potential negative impact of SHCs on training load,  
9 studies<sup>11, 12</sup> have proposed that SHCs may be a risk factor for new injury. However there has been limited  
10 prospective ESP research<sup>10</sup> undertaken to date to confirm this association.

11 Alongside SHCs, sleep is regarded as a vital component of athlete recovery, wellbeing and sport  
12 performance.<sup>7, 13</sup> Previous studies have identified poor sleep in up to 85% of ESPs and 47.8% of non-ESPs.<sup>7</sup>  
13 Sleep can be defined by different parameters including sleep quantity,<sup>14-16</sup> quality,<sup>11, 14</sup> and efficiency.<sup>16</sup>  
14 Measurement of sleep quantity has been shown to predict injury risk in a mixed study<sup>15</sup> of adolescent ESP  
15 and non-ESP, however this association has not been demonstrated in two other non-ESP studies.<sup>12, 16</sup>  
16 Despite this an International Olympic Consensus statement recognised that ‘given the potential  
17 consequences of insufficient sleep on health, behaviour, attention and athletic performance, interventions  
18 to support adequate sleep should be implemented’.<sup>17</sup> To our knowledge there is no prospective study which  
19 has investigated the association between sleep quantity and new injury risk within an ESP.

20 The primary aim of this prospective study was to examine new injury risk associations with total SHCs,  
21 SHC subscales (cardiorespiratory, gastro-intestinal, psychological/lifestyle) and sleep quantity. A  
22 secondary aim was to identify if there was an association between total SHCs, sleep quantity and training  
23 load factors.

24

## 1 2.0 Methods

2

3 From 15 ESP clubs in Ireland, 116 participants (range = 3-19 per club) (Mean age  $42\pm 10$  years, mean  
4 endurance sport training experience  $9\pm 7$  years and mean weekly number of training sessions per week  $5\pm 2$ )  
5 were initially recruited by the lead author who met with each club face to face. Other than age (18-65 years)  
6 whereby 3 participants were excluded (2 <18 years and 1 >65 years), no other exclusion criteria were  
7 applied. Using no standardised definition, participants subjectively reported their competitive training level  
8 as elite (5%) or recreational (95%). Over a 52-week period the participants utilised a weekly electronic  
9 online 'training diary' to subjectively report validated training data on; (1) each training/competition event,  
10 (2) day of the week, (3) session type (e.g. running, swimming), (4) duration (minutes), (5) distance  
11 (meters/kilometers) and (6) session intensity (session training load (session Rating of Perceived Exertion  
12 (sRPE)) (Borg CR-10 scale), (7) SHCs and (8) sleep quantity per day over each week/weekend day (hours  
13 per day (hrs/d)).<sup>18</sup> Participants had unlimited access to update the weekly electronic training diary.  
14 Participants received an email with a link to the diary on the Sunday of each training week and an email  
15 reminder four days later from the lead author (RJ). Participants also subjectively recorded any injury  
16 episode by body location each week. Twenty-one participants were removed due to submitting insufficient  
17 data (<30 weeks of complete data) resulting in a final study population of 95 participants across five  
18 endurance disciplines (table 1). Ethical approval was granted by a local university and face to face written  
19 and informed consent was provided by all participants.

20

21

22 16 of 29 potential SHCs were selected a priori for relevance and convenience. These were collected based  
23 on the validated SHC inventory which has been used previously in non-ESP based studies.<sup>7, 11</sup> Participants  
24 were asked to select (yes/no) if they had experienced any of the following SHC inventory items during that  
25 training week: Cardiorespiratory SHCs (palpitations/extra heart beats, chest pain, heart burn and breathing

1 difficulty), Gastrointestinal SHCs (stomach discomfort, diarrhoea, constipation and low appetite) and  
2 Psychological/lifestyle SHCs (anxiety, sadness/depression, low mood, dizziness, tiredness, sleep problems  
3 or low energy). The total number of SHCs were calculated over the 52-week period and a mean was  
4 generated. Total SHCs were then sub-categorised to provide a number for each SHC subscale reported:  
5 cardio-respiratory, gastro-intestinal or psychological/lifestyle SHCs.

6

7

8 Seven hours sleep per day was selected as the reference value based on the median (6.9hrs/d) sleep quantity  
9 over a week/weekend within the ESP. To aid analysis, sleep quantity was categorised as < 7hrs/d or >7  
10 hrs/d. These categories were selected to ensure even distribution of the study population across the sleep  
11 quantity categories (table 2). To identify if SHCs and sleep quantity significantly contributed to the onset  
12 of a new injury episode, a 7 and 14-day time lag was implemented.<sup>19</sup> This means that if a new injury episode  
13 was reported in week 10, then SHCs and sleep quantity were analysed for week 9 (i.e. 7-day lag) and week  
14 8 (i.e. 14-day lag) (supplementary figure 2). SHC and sleep quantity from the same week as the reported  
15 new injury episode were not analysed as it would be unclear if the SHCs or sleep quantity contributed to,  
16 or were the result of, the new injury episode.

17 A new injury episode was defined as any physical musculoskeletal complaint/impairment, solely due to  
18 participation in endurance discipline training and/or competition. A new injury episode may have caused  
19 the participant to either not continue to train/compete fully or caused reduced or missed time from  
20 training/competition.<sup>20, 21</sup> This definition was provided to participants in the electronic training diary. If a  
21 participant reported an initial injury episode in a particular body location it was categorised as a new injury  
22 episode. If the participant, then reported another injury episode in the same body location within the  
23 subsequent four weeks it was not included as a new injury episode during analysis.

24 Total SHCs, SHC subscales and ESP baseline characteristics were analysed with chi-squared tests and  
25 Fisher's exact tests which summarised normally distributed data as mean and standard deviations and

1 skewed continuous data as median and interquartile ranges. Differences between endurance athlete  
2 subgroups, according to continuous variables, were assessed via analysis of variance (table 1). New injury  
3 rates were expressed as the total number of new injuries/total number of training sessions performed and  
4 reported per 1000 hours of training. Missing data (<5%) was attributed to the participants being unavailable  
5 to submit weekly SHCs and sleep data. A variety of options of single imputation ranging from mean and  
6 median imputation through to last observation carried forward and regression imputation were  
7 considered. Regression imputation was avoided due to the complexity of the approach within a frailty  
8 model setting. Last observation carried forward was also discounted on expert advice (LB) that weekly  
9 SHC and sleep data varied. Therefore, to account for participants missing data (<5% for each variable) a  
10 median response was inputted as the most appropriate option.

11  
12 Based on previous studies using multilevel analysis approaches within medical<sup>22</sup> and sport medicine  
13 research,<sup>4</sup> a shared frailty model using random effects following a gamma distribution, with a mean equal  
14 to one and unknown variance to account for the within participant correlation between new injury episodes,  
15 was conducted. A restricted maximum likelihood criterion was used to choose the variance of the random  
16 effect. Results were presented as Hazard Ratios (HRs) with 95% confidence intervals and a p value ( $\leq 0.05$ )  
17 indicating results of statistical significance. A parsimonious model was built from a pool of eleven variables  
18 (7 and 14-day lag Total SHC, 7 and 14-day lag Cardiorespiratory SHC, 7 and 14-day lag Gastrointestinal  
19 SHC, 7 and 14-day lag Psychological/lifestyle SHC, 7 and 14-day lag Sleep quantity and Endurance athlete  
20 subgroups) via backwards selection according to Akaike's Information Criterion. Continuous variables  
21 were investigated using fractional polynomial transformations with results presented as post-hoc defined  
22 categorical variables and categories chosen according to knot positions for a spline model fit to the data. A  
23 multi-level linear regression sub-analysis was conducted to identify the influence of training load factors  
24 prior to, and after, the SHC was reported, with results reported as Relative Risks (RR).

1 Discrimination of the parsimonious model was assessed using the c-statistic. Discrimination refers to the  
2 ability of the prognostic model to differentiate between those who reported a new injury during the study  
3 and those who did not. The c-statistic is equivalent to the area under the Receiver Operator Characteristic  
4 (ROC) curve and is measured on a scale ranging from 0.5 (no better than chance) to 1 (perfect prognostic).  
5 The c-statistic for IP modelling was 0.73 (0.71 to 0.74) indicating the model was a good fit overall. Analyses  
6 were performed using R version 3.2.3.

7

### 8 **3.0 Results**

9

10 89 of the 95 participants (92.6%) submitted SHC, sleep quantity, training load and injury data for all weeks  
11 of data collection. Table 1 displays the mean  $\pm$  standard deviation and median values for each variable  
12 across the study period. Of the total SHCs reported, 61% were psychological/lifestyle, 25% gastrointestinal  
13 and 14% cardiorespiratory (table 1). The total mean prevalence of all SHCs was 13.6 per participant across  
14 the 52-week study period. Runners reported 65.9% of all SHCs, while accounting for 59% of the study  
15 population.

16 The mean hours of sleep per day for the ESP was  $6.9 \pm 0.9$ . There were significant differences ( $p < 0.000$ )  
17 across the endurance subgroups where runners had the lowest mean level of sleep per day ( $6.8 \pm 1.0$ hrs)  
18 compared to triathletes who had the highest ( $7.2 \pm 0.7$ hrs/d). The mean prevalence of new injuries was 6.1  
19 per participant, with a new injury rate of 0.12 per training session and 5.3 new injuries per 1000 hours of  
20 training. The lower limb (knee & below) accounted for 33.6% of new injury episodes (supplementary figure  
21 1). An initial parsimonious multivariable analysis of eleven proposed prognostic variables identified four  
22 variables which may have had a significant association with new injury risk. A second parsimonious  
23 multivariable analysis of these four prognostic variables (table 2) demonstrated that two prognostic

1 variables (i.e. 14-day lag sleep quantity and 7-day lag psychological/lifestyle SHCs) were statically  
2 associated with new injury ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

3 7-day lag total SHCs did not demonstrate a significant association with new injury risk (HR=1.09, CI 95%  
4 =0.79-1.21,  $p=0.06$ ). Of the SHC subscales, only 7-day lag psychological/lifestyle SHCs were significantly  
5 associated with an increased risk of a new injury episodes (table 2). Specifically, ESPs who reported a  
6 psychological/lifestyle SHC had a 32% increased risk of a new injury episode in the following week  
7 (HR=1.32, CI 95%=1.01-1.72,  $p < 0.04$ ).

8 Whilst a 7-day lag sleep quantity was not associated with new injury episodes, a 14-day lag sleep quantity  
9 demonstrated a significant, almost linear association with new injury episodes (figure 1). Comparing sleep  
10 quantity to the reference of seven hours, a 14-day lag sleep quantity  $< 7$  hrs/d increased the risk of new  
11 injury by 51% (HR=1.51, CI 95%=2.02-1.13,  $p < 0.01$ ) whilst a 14-day lag sleep quantity  $> 7$  hrs/d reduced  
12 new IP risk by 37% (HR=0.63, CI 95%=0.45-0.87,  $p < 0.01$ ) (table 2).

13 A multi-level linear regression sub-analysis did not find a significant association with total SHCs and  
14 preceding or subsequent training load factors (weekly training load, 4-weekly cumulative training load and  
15 acute chronic workload ratio). For every 1000 arbitrary unit (AU) increase in 14-day lag weekly training  
16 load (WL) there were 0.08 more total SHCs reported (RR=0.08, CI 95% =-0.04-0.21,  $p=0.20$ ) and with  
17 every 0.1AU increase in 14-day lag Acute Chronic Workload Ratio (ACWR) (7:28 days) there were 0.03  
18 more total SHCs reported (RR=0.03, CI 95% = -0.18-0.24,  $p=0.79$ ). A multi-level linear regression sub-  
19 analysis did not demonstrate a significant association with sleep quantity and preceding/subsequent training  
20 load factors ( $p > 0.05$ ). Whilst these findings did not reach statistical significance, they should be considered  
21 practically within an ESP.

22

23

## 1 4.0 Discussion

2

3 The aim of this prospective study was to determine if there was an association between new injury risk,  
4 total SHCs, SHC subscales and sleep quantity. The results demonstrate that psychological/lifestyle SHCs  
5 reported in the previous 7 days and a sleep quantity of <7 hrs/d over the past 2 weeks were associated with  
6 new injury risk and should be considered in injury risk management within an ESP.<sup>4</sup> Seven day lag sleep  
7 quantity did not indicate an association to increased new injury risk and a secondary regression sub-analysis  
8 did not identify an association between total SHCs, SHC subscales, sleep quantity and training load.

9 Psychological/lifestyle SHCs were both the most frequently reported (61%) SHC and the only SHC  
10 category associated with new injury risk. Participants who reported a psychological/lifestyle SHC had a  
11 32% increased risk of a new injury episode in the following week. Whilst psychological/lifestyle SHCs  
12 have received limited attention to date within ESP literature, a study of triathletes<sup>23</sup> found that psychological  
13 stressors, such as depressed mood and sleep disturbance, had a greater impact than training load factors on  
14 injury incidence. Likewise, non-ESP studies have demonstrated an association with psychological/lifestyle  
15 SHCs (i.e. psychological complaints,<sup>11</sup> low mood,<sup>11</sup> anxiety<sup>7</sup>) and increased injury risk. A number of models  
16 have been proposed which aim to define the relationship between psychological/lifestyle SHCs and  
17 increased injury risk including; Williams and Andersen's<sup>24</sup> 1998 stress-injury model, Johnson and  
18 Ivarsson's<sup>25</sup> empirical model of injury risk within non-ESPs and Junge's<sup>26</sup> model of the influence of  
19 psychological factors on sports injury. These models identify a number of psychological/lifestyle factors  
20 which may influence injury risk including personality traits,<sup>24, 25</sup> psychological stressors,<sup>24-26</sup> coping  
21 resources<sup>24-26</sup> and emotional state.<sup>26</sup>

22

23 Whilst the mechanisms by which psychological/lifestyle SHCs impact upon injury risk remain unclear,  
24 studies have demonstrated that psychological/lifestyle SHCs can impact upon training load factors and

1 conversely training load factors can impact upon psychological/lifestyle SHCs.<sup>27, 28</sup> A study of 400  
2 swimmers<sup>27</sup> and a recent non-ESP systematic review<sup>28</sup> demonstrated acute increases in training load factors  
3 resulted in increased psychological/lifestyle SHCs (e.g. mood, anxiety, depression, sleep problems). A  
4 study of adolescent athletes found that personality traits such as perfectionism can lead to maladaptive  
5 training load management and overtraining.<sup>29</sup> However, a further sub-analysis found no association between  
6 psychological/lifestyle SHCs and training load factors within this study of ESPs. Other mechanisms by  
7 which psychological/lifestyle SHCs may be associated with injury risk have been proposed.  
8 Psychological/lifestyle SHCs, including sleep, may affect an individual's sensitivity to musculoskeletal  
9 injury or pain.<sup>30</sup> Lower back pain (LBP) research has shown that individuals with psychological/lifestyle  
10 SHCs, in particular stress, are at a greater risk of chronic LBP.<sup>30</sup> Psychological/lifestyle SHCs may also  
11 impact upon an individual's response to previous injury experiences. For example, the fear-avoidance  
12 model suggests that an injury episode may lead to movement avoidance and maladaptive training  
13 approaches.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, whilst the precise mechanisms involved require further study, there is a growing  
14 evidence to support consideration of psychological/lifestyle SHCs within both ESPs<sup>23</sup> and non-ESP.<sup>11</sup>

15  
16 Low sleep quantity and quality<sup>14</sup> has been identified within an ESP. The current study reported a mean  
17 sleep duration of 6.9hrs per day, similar to that reported in another ESP study.<sup>14</sup> Training load factors,  
18 adrenaline levels, pain/inflammation and lifestyle/family factors have been proposed as potential factors  
19 which may account for these low levels of sleep quantity and/or quality,<sup>31,32</sup> however this study did not find  
20 an association between training load and psychological/lifestyle factors and sleep quantity. This current  
21 study did identify that a 14-day lag sleep quantity > 7hrs/d reduced the risk of new injury by 37% and a 14-  
22 day lag sleep quantity of <7hrs/d increased the risk of new injury by 51% (figure 1). Whilst both previous  
23 ESP<sup>15</sup> and non-ESP<sup>31</sup> studies have identified low sleep quantity <8hrs/day to be associated with increased  
24 injury risk, this is the first study to demonstrate a 'lag' effect between low sleep quantity and increased  
25 injury risk.<sup>16</sup> The identification of a 'lag' between low sleep quantity and injury risk has important

1 implications for future research. A previous sleep study has proposed that not only can low sleep  
2 quantity/quality negatively impact upon the athlete's motor and cognitive functions,<sup>32</sup> but that physiological  
3 mediators may also impair immune responses, impair micro-trauma healing and increase muscle tension.<sup>32</sup>  
4 The impact of these individual factors on new injury risk requires further investigation, particularly within  
5 ESPs.

6  
7 Previous studies within non-ESPs have demonstrated an association between high training load factors and  
8 both cardiorespiratory and gastrointestinal SHCs.<sup>19, 31</sup> These studies have proposed that training load can  
9 affect immune system responses with moderate training loads helping to stimulate the immune system and  
10 prevent illness whilst acute spikes in training loads may suppress the immune system increasing the risk of  
11 SHCs.<sup>19</sup> Whilst there was a higher percentage of weekly reported Psychological/lifestyle SHCs (61%)  
12 compared to Cardiorespiratory (14%) and Gastrointestinal (25%) SHCs within the current study population,  
13 our analysis did not demonstrate an association with weekly reported SHCs and training load spikes over a  
14 weekly and four weekly period. However, this is in contrast with another ESP study,<sup>3</sup> which demonstrated  
15 higher training loads were associated with cardiorespiratory and gastrointestinal SHCs, suggesting SHCs  
16 be considered during the application of training loads.

17

## 18 **5.0 Limitations**

19

20 A limitation of this prospective study is the subjective reporting of SHCs, sleep quantity and new injury by  
21 the ESP population which introduces the potential for reporting bias. There was no independent assessment  
22 on the confirmation or severity of SHCs or new injuries reported by the participants. However, definitions  
23 relating to SHCs and injury were provided to the participants. The selection of 4 weeks as a cut-off for

1 another injury in the same location being considered a new injury was somewhat arbitrary. Generalisability  
2 of results and selection bias must also be considered between the ESP disciplines recruited, and the study  
3 population sub-groups not being equally represented (elite/recreational, and sex). Runners accounted for  
4 59% of the study population and swimmers only accounted for 2.1% of the population. Whilst only mean  
5 and median week/weekend sleep quantity was analysed within this study, there was no measurement of  
6 sleep disorders or sleep quality and future studies should consider more detailed and robust measures of  
7 sleep quantity and quality.

8

## 9 **6.0 Conclusions**

10

11 This study demonstrates that both psychological/lifestyle SHCs and low sleep quantity are associated with  
12 increased new injury risk within an ESP. This study also highlighted a potential lag between low sleep  
13 quantity and its subsequent impact on new injury risk and has important implications for future research.  
14 No association was demonstrated between SHCs or sleep quantity and training load factors. These findings  
15 highlight the importance of considering psychological/lifestyle SHCs and sleep quantity when managing  
16 new injury risk within an ESP. Further research investigating the mechanism by which  
17 psychological/lifestyle SHCs and sleep quantity impact upon new injury risk may allow the development  
18 of injury prevention strategies within ESPs.

19

20

21

22

1 **Practical applications:**

- 2       • Psychological/lifestyle subjective health complaints and low sleep quantity can increase the risk of  
3       new injury within an endurance sporting population.
- 4       • Psychological/lifestyle SHCs and sleep quantity should be considered, and actively managed, with  
5       a view to reducing injury rates within an endurance sporting population.
- 6       • A time lag for sleep should be used when monitoring new injury risk within an endurance sporting  
7       population.

1 **Table 1: Endurance population characteristics**

2

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Total population n=95</b>	<b>Runners n=56 (59.0%)</b>	<b>Triathletes n=18 (18.9%)</b>	<b>Swimmers n=2 (2.1%)</b>	<b>Cyclists n=10 (10.5%)</b>	<b>Rowers n=9 (9.5%)</b>	<b>Differences between groups (p-value)</b>
<b>Males, N (%)</b>	61 (64.2%)	29 (47.6%)	16 (26.2%)	1 (1.6%)	9 (14.8%)	6 (9.8%)	<b>0.02*</b>
<b>Age (yrs) (mean ±sd)</b>	42.2 ± 10.0	42.3 ± 8.8	40.2 ± 7.4	34.5 ± 20.5	42.1 ± 11.3	48.1 ±16.5	0.30
<b>Weekly number of training sessions (IQR)</b>	4 (3:6)	4 (2:6)	5 (4:7)	2 (2:6)	3 (2:4)	3 (3:5)	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
<b>Total new injury, N (%)</b>	585 (100)	311 (53.1)	140 (23.7)	17 (2.9)	70 (11.8)	50(8.5)	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
<b>WL (AU) (IQR)</b>	1130 (630:1740)	1005 (530:1599)	1465 (870:2160)	1890 (360:4905)	1225 (783:1735)	1070 (690:1520)	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
<b>CL (AU) (IQR)</b>	4370 (2550:6405)	3930 (2070:5915)	5498 (3520:7985)	9303 (840:17749)	4800 (3465:6311)	4235 (3045:5720)	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
<b>ACWR rolling average (7:28 days) (IQR)</b>	1.02 (0.78:1.26)	1.02 (0.78:1.26)	1.01 (0.82:1.23)	1.05 (0.87:1.33)	1.04 (0.69:1.33)	1.05 (0.76:1.29)	<b>0.81</b>
<b>Total SHCs</b>	N=1303  (100%)	N=859  (65.9%)	N=306  (23.4%)	N=6 (0.5%)	N=81  (6.3%)	N=51  (3.9%)	<b>0.000*</b>
<b>Cardiorespiratory SHCs</b>	N=188	N=137  (72.8%)	N=31  (16.4%)	N=1  (0.5%)	N=5  (2.6%)	N=14  (7.7%)	<b>0.028*</b>

	(14% of total SHCs)						
<b>Gastrointestinal SHCs</b>	N=313 (25% of total SHCs)	N=200 (63.9%)	N=100 (32.1%)	N=2 (0.6%)	N=6 (1.9%)	N=5 (1.5%)	<b>0.001*</b>
<b>Psychological/ lifestyle SHCs</b>	N=802 (61% of total SHCs)	N=522 (65.1%)	N=175 (21.9%)	N=3 (0.3%)	N=70 (8.8%)	N=32 (3.9%)	<b>0.000*</b>
<b>Sleep quantity (hrs/d) (mean±std)</b>	6.92±0.97	6.82±1.01	7.28±0.73	7.19±0.66	6.55±1.15	7.17±0.65	<b>0.000*</b>

1

2 *N=number; p-value; \* =significant difference; yrs=years; SD=Standard Deviation; IQR=Inter Quartile Range; WL=weekly training load;*

3 *AU=Arbitrary Unit; CL=4-weekly cumulative training load; ACWR= acute chronic workload ratio; SHCs=subjective health complaints; hrs/d =*

4 *mean hours per day*

1 **Table 2: Parsimonious multivariable model data for Endurance athlete subgroups, SHC and mean**  
 2 **hours of sleep associated to new injury episode.**

3

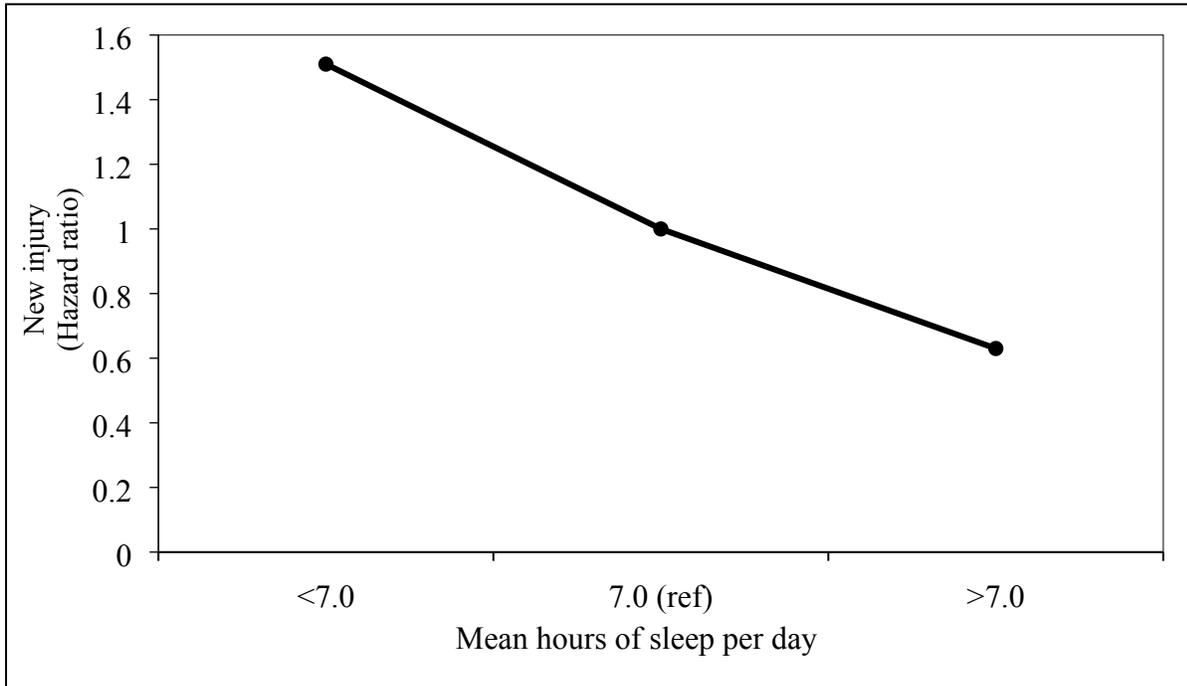
Variable	Population Reference group (%)	Population Comparison Groups (%)	p-value	HR (95% CI)	HR (95% CI) – post-hoc categorisation
Endurance athlete subgroup	Runner (59%)	Triathlete (18.9%)	0.19	1.53 (0.91-2.89)	
		Swimmer (2.1%)	0.49	0.58 (0.12-2.71)	
		Cyclist (10.5%)	0.20	1.79 (0.74-4.35)	
		Rower (9.5%)	0.60	1.24 (0.55-2.80)	
14-day lag sleep quantity	7 hrs/d (38%)	<7 hrs/d (30%)	0.01*	0.89 (0.82-0.97)	1.51 (2.02-1.13)
		>7 hrs/d (32%)			0.63 (0.45-0.87)
7-day lag psychological/ lifestyle SHCs	No (81%)	Yes (19%)	0.04*	1.32 (1.01-1.72)	
7-day lag total SHCs	No 71%	Yes (29%)	0.06	1.09 (0.79-1.21)	
7-day lag gastrointestinal SHCs	No (86%)	Yes (14%)	0.09	0.77 (0.56-1.05)	
7-day lag cardiorespiratory SHCs	No (82%)	Yes (18 %)	0.07	1.16 (0.95-1.36)	

4 *HR=hazard ratio; CI=confidence intervals; p-value; \*=significant association; hrs/d=mean hours per day;*

5 *SHCs= subjective health complaints*

1 **Figure 1: Association between 14-day lag sleep quantity (mean hours of sleep per day) and new**  
2 **injury.**

3



4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

## 1   **References**

2

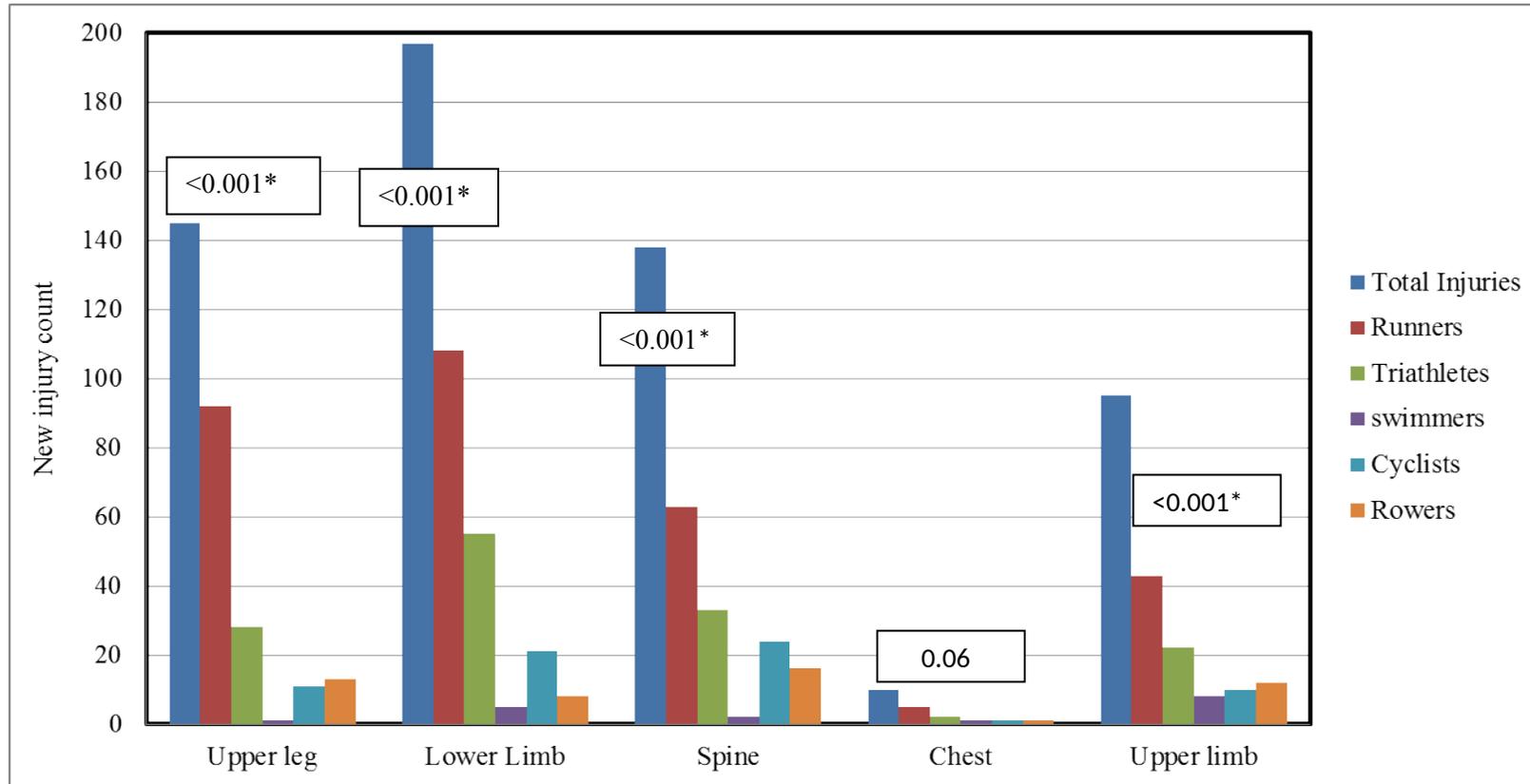
- 3   1.    Hulme A, Nielsen RO, Timpka T et al. Risk and protective factors for middle- and long-distance  
4        running-related Injury. *Sports med.* 2017; 47(5):869-886.
- 5   2.    Johnston R, Cahalan R, O'Keeffe M et al. The associations between training load and baseline  
6        characteristics on musculoskeletal injury and pain in endurance sport populations: A systematic  
7        review. *J Sci Med Sport.* 2018; 910-918.
- 8   3.    Van Tonder A, Schweltnus M, Swanevelder et al. A prospective cohort study of 7031 distance  
9        runners shows that 1 in 13 report systemic symptoms of an acute illness in the 8-12 day period  
10       before a race, increasing their risk of not finishing the race 1.9 times for those runners who started  
11       the race: SAFER study IV. *Br J Sports Med.* 2016; 50(15):939-945.
- 12   4.    von Rosen P, Frohm A, Kottorp A et al. Multiple factors explain injury risk in adolescent elite  
13        athletes: Applying a biopsychosocial perspective. *Scand J Med Sci Sports.* 2017; (27): 2059-  
14        2069.
- 15   5.    Wiese-Bjornstal DM. Psychology and socioculture affect injury risk, response, and recovery in  
16        high-intensity athletes: a consensus statement. *Scand J Med Sci Sports.* 2010; 20 Suppl 2:103-  
17        111.
- 18   6.    Thygesen E, Lindstrom TC, Saevareid HI et al. The Subjective Health Complaints Inventory: a  
19        useful instrument to identify various aspects of health and ability to cope in older people? *Scand J*  
20        *Public Health.* 2009; 37(7):690-696.
- 21   7.    Biggins M, Cahalan R, Comyns T et al. Poor sleep is related to lower general health, increased  
22        stress and increased confusion in elite Gaelic athletes. *Phys Sportsmed.* 2018; 46(1):14-20.
- 23   8.    Schweltnus M, Derman W, Page T, et al. Illness during the 2010 Super 14 Rugby Union  
24        tournament – a prospective study involving 22 676 player days. *Br J Sports Med.* 2012;  
25        46(7):499.
- 26   9.    Gouttebarga V, Frings-Dresen MH, Sluiter JK. Mental and psychosocial health among current  
27        and former professional footballers. *Occupat Med.* 2015; 65(3):190-196.
- 28   10.   Main LC, Landers GJ. Overtraining or burnout: A training and psycho-behavioural case study. *Int*  
29        *J Sports Sci Coach.* 2012; 7(1):23-31.
- 30   11.   Cahalan R, Purtill H, O'Sullivan P et al. A cross-sectional study of elite adult Irish dancers:  
31        biopsychosocial traits, pain, and injury. *J Dance Med Sci.* 2015; 19(1):31-43.
- 32   12.   Killen NM, Gabbett TJ, Jenkins DG. Training loads and incidence of injury during the preseason  
33        in professional rugby league players. *J Strength Cond Res.* 2010; 24(8):2079-2084.
- 34   13.   Samuels C. Sleep, recovery, and performance: the new frontier in high-performance athletics.  
35        *Phys rehabil clin N Am.* 2009; 20(1):149-159, ix.
- 36   14.   Lastella M, Lovell GP, Sargent C. Athletes' precompetitive sleep behaviour and its relationship  
37        with subsequent precompetitive mood and performance. *Eur J Sport Sci.* 2014; 14 Suppl 1:S123-  
38        130.
- 39   15.   Milewski M, Skaggs D, A Bishop G, et al. Chronic lack of sleep is associated with increased  
40        sports injuries in adolescent athletes. *J Pediatr Orthop.* 2014; 34:129-133.
- 41   16.   Dennis J, Dawson B, Heasman J et al. Sleep patterns and injury occurrence in elite Australian  
42        footballers. *J Sci Med Sport.* 2016; 19(2):113-116.
- 43   17.   Reardon CL, Hainline B, Aron CM, et al. Mental health in elite athletes: International Olympic  
44        committee consensus statement. *Br J Sports Med.* 2019; 53(11):667-699.
- 45   18.   Johnston R, Cahalan R, Bonnett L, et al. Training load and baseline characteristics associated  
46        with new injury/pain within an endurance sporting population: A prospective study. *Int J Sport*  
47        *Physiol.* 2019; 14(5):590-597.

- 1 19. Piggott B, Newton, MJ, McGuigan, MR. The relationship between training load and incidence of  
2 injury and illness over a pre-season at an Australian football league club. *J Austr Strength Cond*  
3 *Res.* 2009; 17(3):4-17.
- 4 20. Soligard T, Schweltnus M, Alonso J-M, et al. How much is too much? (Part 1) International  
5 Olympic Committee consensus statement on load in sport and risk of injury. *Br J Sports Med.*  
6 2016; 50(17):1030-1041.
- 7 21. O'Sullivan K, O'Sullivan PB, Gabbett TJ. Pain and fatigue in sport: are they so different? *Br J*  
8 *Sports Med.* 2018; 52(9):555.
- 9 22. Bonnett LJ, Powell GA, Tudur Smith C et al. Risk of a seizure recurrence after a breakthrough  
10 seizure and the implications for driving: further analysis of the standard versus new antiepileptic  
11 drugs (SANAD) randomised controlled trial. *BMJ Open.* 2017; 7(7).
- 12 23. Main LC, Landers GJ, Grove JR et al. Training patterns and negative health outcomes in  
13 triathlon: longitudinal observations across a full competitive season. *J Sports Med Phys Fitness.*  
14 2010; 50(4):475-485.
- 15 24. Williams JM, Andersen MB. Psychosocial antecedents of sport injury: Review and critique of the  
16 stress and injury model'. *J Appl Sport Psychol.* 1998; 10(1):5-25.
- 17 25. Johnson U, Ivarsson A. Psychological predictors of sport injuries among junior soccer players.  
18 *Scand J Med Sci Sports.* 2011; 21(1):129-136.
- 19 26. Junge A. The influence of psychological factors on sports injuries. Review of the literature. *Am J*  
20 *Sports Med.* 2000; 28(5 Suppl):S10-15.
- 21 27. Morgan WP, Brown DR, Raglin JS et al. Psychological monitoring of overtraining and staleness.  
22 *Br J Sports Med.* 1987; 21(3):107-114.
- 23 28. Saw AE, Main LC, Gastin PB. Monitoring the athlete training response: subjective self-reported  
24 measures trump commonly used objective measures: a systematic review. *Br J Sports Med.* 2016;  
25 50(5):281-291.
- 26 29. Madigan DJ, Stoeber J, Passfield L. Perfectionism and training distress in junior athletes: a  
27 longitudinal investigation. *J Sports Sci.* 2017; 35(5):470-475.
- 28 30. Linton SJ, Shaw WS. Impact of psychological factors in the experience of pain. *Phys Ther.* 2011;  
29 91(5):700-711.
- 30 31. Jones CM, Griffiths PC, Towers C et al. Pre-season injury and illness associations with  
31 perceptual wellness, neuromuscular fatigue, sleep and training in elite rugby union. *J Austr*  
32 *Strength Cond.* 2018; 26(2):6-16.
- 33 32. Andersen MB, Williams JM. Athletic injury, psychosocial factors and perceptual changes during  
34 stress. *J Sports Sci.* 1999; 17(9):735-741.

35

**Acknowledgements:** The Faculty of Education and Health Sciences at the University of Limerick funded RJ through a PhD scholarship.

Supplementary figure 1: Location of new injuries



*p-value\*=significant difference*

**Supplementary figure 2: lag diagram**

