ABSTRACT

Background: Dancers are aesthetic athletes who engage in rigorous physical activity. Researchers have noted that 50-85% of dancers are injured annually. Therefore, clinicians have begun providing healthcare for dancers. As part of standard care, clinicians often use health-related quality of life (HRQoL) measures to examine their patient's physical, mental, and social health. While clinicians have previously used several measures to examine athletes' HRQoL, which measures are used to examine dancers' HRQoL remains unclear. This lack of information may make it difficult for clinicians working with dancers to understand their patients' overall wellbeing and impede their ability to devise appropriate treatment plans.

Purpose: Review existing literature on HRQoL instruments used to measure dancers' health and wellbeing.

Design: Systematic Review

Methods: Three databases were searched (EBSCO Host, Web of Science, and ProQuest Performing Arts) through March 2019 to identify studies that used HRQoL measures to study dancers. Four studies qualified based on the eligibility criteria. Two reviewers independently scored the studies using (1) the modified Downs and Black Quality Index Tool (mDB) yielding a percentage out of 28 possible points scoring methodological rigor; (2) Strength of Recommendation Taxonomy (SORT) tool (i.e. A, B, or C); and (3) Level of Evidence (i.e. Level 1, 2, or 3). Any disagreement was resolved by discussion and a third reviewer (JPA) was available when consensus could not be reached.

Results: All four studies ranged from 46.4-60.7% of mDB scores, B or C strength of recommendations, and Level 2 evidence. Eight different HRQoL instruments were used across the four studies. Although no two HRQoL measures were the same across studies, several measures had variations of similar overlapping constructs, and all measured some mental health construct.

Conclusions: Overall, eight different measures were used to examine dancers' HRQoL. All measures examine some construct of mental health. This finding is important considering the mental aspect of dance. Additional research is needed to examine which measures are suitable to study dancers' HRQoL. Clinicians can use this information to track their dancers' overall wellbeing by noting how HRQoL fluctuates over a season, after injury, and over a dancer's career – overall reducing their dancers' injury risk and enhancing performance.

Levels of Evidence: Level 1a

Word Count: 349/350

Key Words: Dancers, Disablement in the Physically Active, Psychological, Physical, Movement System