

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH

## RUNNING INJURY DEVELOPMENT: THE ATTITUDES OF MIDDLE- AND LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS AND THEIR COACHES

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Behavioral science methods have rarely been used in running injury research. Therefore, the attitudes amongst runners and their coaches regarding factors leading to running injuries warrants formal investigation.

**Purpose:** To investigate the attitudes of middle- and long-distance runners able to compete in national championships and their coaches about factors associated with running injury development.

**Methods:** A link to an online survey was distributed to middle- and long-distance runners and their coaches across 25 Danish Athletics Clubs. The main research question was: "Which factors do you believe influence the risk of running injuries?". In response to this question, the athletes and coaches had to click "Yes" or "No" to 19 predefined factors. In addition, they had the possibility to submit a free-text response.

**Results:** A total of 68 athletes and 19 coaches were included in the study. A majority of the athletes (76% [95%CI: 66%; 86%]) and coaches (79% [95%CI: 61%; 97%]) reported "Ignoring pain" as a risk factor for running injury. A majority of the coaches reported "Reduced muscle strength" (79% [95%CI: 61%; 97%]) and "high running distance" (74% [95%CI: 54%; 94%]) to be associated with injury, while half of the runners found "insufficient recovery between running sessions" (53% [95%CI: 47%; 71%]) important.

**Conclusion:** Runners and their coaches emphasize ignoring pain as a factor associated with injury development. The question remains how much running, if any at all, runners having slight symptoms or mild pain, are able to tolerate before these symptoms develop into a running-related injury.

**Level of Evidence:** 3b

**Keywords:** Attitudes, coach, etiology, running injury

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