Assessment of Psychosocial Stressors in Dance Auditions

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OVERVIEW

- Formulating the Question
- LITERATURE REVIEW: What has been done?
- Developing our Study
- Data Collection Process
- Preliminary Findings
- Next Steps...
Formulating the Question
• Distress can lead to:
  • headaches
  • upset stomach
  • blood pressure
  • chest pain
  • problems sleeping
  • substance abuse
  • bring on or worsen certain symptoms or diseases
  • physical injury??
QUESTION

Is there a relationship between psychological stress and physical injury in dancers during an audition?

HYPOTHESIS

Dancers with higher stress responses are more likely to experience physical injury during an audition.

Analysis of 5 previous studies: Sports Injuries flowchart applied to dance

*Similar studies on dance psychology and injury, but never at auditions!*
1. **Psychological Factors Associated with Performance-Limiting Injuries in Professional Ballet Dancers.** Relationship of psychosocial variables and performance-limiting physical injuries in German ballet dancers (Adam, Brassington, Steiner, and Matheson. Journal of Dance Medicine & Science, April ’04)

- **Results:** absence due to injury significantly correlated with stress,
- sleep disturbances, and negative mood states.

Methods

• **Dance Experiences Survey** (study #3)
  - first standardized measure for **dance-specific stressors** (relationship with choreographers, politics associated with dance activities, managing time, support from others, etc)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLICABLE?</th>
<th>IMPACT SCALE: extremely negative ➔ extremely positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Fear of getting injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• **Athletic Coping Skills Inventory** (study #2)
  - for sports psychology, we modified to apply to dancers

- “I remain positive and enthusiastic during auditions, no matter how badly things are going”
  - 0 (almost never) 1 (sometimes) 2 (often) 3 (almost always)
• DES, ACSI, & our own additions

(with input from Brenda Way, KT Nelson, Kimi Okada)

• Are you currently injured? Concealing an injury? Do you believe that by auditioning you will get jobs? And that will last a long time? What one word describes about auditions?

Our Survey
1. Informed Consent (HSIRB)
   - Risks/Benefits
   - Complete anonymity via code names, nobody else will look at your responses

2. Survey Administration and completion (15-20 minute long survey)
   Administered prior to start of audition/workshop week

3. Online follow-up survey administered one week later, 3-4 days to complete
   (5-10 minute survey)

...What did we find??
### Preliminary Findings: Dancer Experiences Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>WMU</th>
<th>ODC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with teachers/choreographers</td>
<td>100% Positive (73%)</td>
<td>91% Positive (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with other dancers</td>
<td>100% Neg/Neutral (30%)</td>
<td>74% Positive (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance not meeting expectation</td>
<td>84% Most notable that didn’t apply to the rest. Healthy.</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incurring an acute injury</td>
<td>66% All Negative</td>
<td>52% All Negative, but only about half worry about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing time</td>
<td>87% Negative (75%)</td>
<td>78% All Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being selected as a dancer</td>
<td>87% Neutral or “-1” (55%)</td>
<td>78% All Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking of changing field of study</td>
<td>31% Negative (83%)</td>
<td>48% Negative 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological demands of training</td>
<td>90% 44% neg, 26% neutral, 30% positive</td>
<td>91% Negative 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from others</td>
<td>84% Positive (84%)</td>
<td>91% positive (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from teach/choreographer</td>
<td>87% 13% neg, 20% neutral, 67%</td>
<td>87% Mostly positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Preliminary Findings: Dancer Experiences Survey (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological readiness for next performance</th>
<th>87%</th>
<th>42% neg/neutral, 58% positive</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>50% neg/neutral, 50% positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a minor, chronic injury</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>All Negative or neutral. 40% neutral or “-1”</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>All Neg. or neutral. 60% neutral or “-1”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency of motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>40% neg, 15% neutral, 45% pos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General frame of mind</td>
<td>76%??</td>
<td>Neg/Neutral (45%)</td>
<td>83%?</td>
<td>26% neg, 16% neutral, 42% positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of injury</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>All Negative</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>All Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort with audition process</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>66% neg, 14% neutral, 20% positive</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>47% neg, 43% positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preliminary Findings

ATHLETIC COPING SKILLS INVENTORY

- Preparation: "On a daily or weekly basis, I set very specific goals for myself that guide what I do"
  MOST COMMON ANSWER: Often (52%)

- Coachability: “When a choreographer or director criticizes me, I become upset rather than helped"
  MOST COMMON ANSWER: Sometimes (56%)

- Stress Management: “When I feel myself getting too tense, I can quickly relax my body and calm myself”
  MOST COMMON ANSWER: Sometimes (47%)

- Pressure: “I tend to perform better under pressure because I think more clearly”
  MOST COMMON ANSWER: Almost Never (40%)
## Preliminary Findings

### OUR QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you think you know what the company/choreographer is looking for?</td>
<td>43% YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35% UNSURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are you currently injured?</td>
<td>21% YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13% UNSURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you believe that participating in this audition will help you get jobs?</strong></td>
<td><strong>84 % YES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have you ever been injured in an audition?</td>
<td>70% NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30% YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are you currently concealing an injury?</td>
<td>83% NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17% YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you have a prior injury that concerns you for this audition?</td>
<td>43% YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56% NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ODC Follow-Up

TOTAL PERCENTAGE affected by injury because of or during ODC AUDITION:

42% (potentially 63%)

Did a prior injury create difficulties?

Are you currently injured?

Here you injured during this audition

- YES
- NO
- UNSURE

86% 7% 7%

14% 14%

79% 21% 71%
TOTAL PERCENTAGE affected by injury because of or during WMU AUDITION:

42%
Preliminary Findings

One word to describe feeling at auditions:
- eager/exciting* most common ODC
- nervous/stress* most common WMU
- necessary (3)

How do you select a company to audition for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age at first audition</td>
<td>7-28 years old</td>
<td>15.6 ODC ... 12 WMU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># auditions attended</td>
<td>2-“100’s” ?</td>
<td>38 ODC ... 12 WMU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># companies performed with</td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>8 companies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WMU:

- “I always get too nervous whether I want to be or not. I don’t do well under pressure.”

- “I feel that someone can learn and grow from every audition”

- “Stressful, yet necessary”

ODC:

- “You never know what’s going through the choreographer’s mind... know that you will be rejected more times than you are accepted. It’s rough.”

- “I don’t mind it. I used to get more nervous but I have a more balanced perspective with...”
Stress Management Techniques:
Next Steps...

1. Wait for decision of IADMS Committee Conference in Singapore

2. Statistical analysis through SSPS software

3. If results are significant, study will be expanded to include many other professional audition settings

4. Sharing of results with company directors and dancers to promote awareness and improvement of audition process and dancer wellness

5. Submission for expansion and publication!
Thank you!
REFERENCES


