# A qualitative content analysis of sports-related thoughts in competitive athletes

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# **Background**



# **Procedure**

### Athletes survey (N=101)

- 1st Content-analysis
- Collection of 788 thoughts
- Analysis of frequency and impact

# Development of sports specific questionnaire (*N*=76; *in progress*)

- · Selection of thoughts (expert panel)
- · Items created from athletes' thoughts
- Application of exploratory factor analysis to examine underlying pattern (content vs. structure)



### Initial coaches survey (N=124)

 Identifying seven main categories



### Athletes survey (N=101)

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Content-analysis on structural level
- · Analysis of cognitive errors



- Validation of sports specific questionnaire
- Correlational analysis of the cognitive errors underlying irrational beliefs

## **Results**

1	1			
		Category	N	Examples
	C1	Ever day life stress	133	"If I do not receive my high school diploma, my parents will rip my head off"
	C2	Self-esteem	146	"Why should I go there? I'm going to lose anyway"
	С3	Performance pressure	131	"I have to get a new personal best" or "I can't fail"
	C4	Current competition	117	"Hopefully my opponent won't get past me."
	C5	Sportive and physical load	124	"I'm not feeling well today." or "I haven't trained well enough."
	C6	General training and sports-related stress	65	"I can't perform well in these competition conditions."
	C7	Worry	72	"If I lose the ball now, we lose." or "What if I make a mistake now?"

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# **Further analyses steps**

Cognitive Errors	N	Examples 3			
Cognitive Errors by A.T. Beck					
Arbitrary interference	18	"If I make a mistake now, I'll never be send back to field again"			
Selective abstraction	11	"I'm the weakest, if we lose it's my fault."			
Minimization/Magnification	-				
Dichotomous thinking	9	"If I can't do it today, I'll quit"			
Overgeneralization	112	"I'll never be able to do that anyway"			
Personalization	11	"The team lost because of me"			
Other cognitive errors					
Should-Statements	106	"I should work harder"; "I have to accomplish this now"; "I can't lose now"			
Emotional reasoning	10	"I don't feel so good today, it can't get any better"			
No clear assigment	171	"My trainer was annoyed to give me a spot in the line-up"			
No cognitive error	350	"I still have so much to do"; "The weather's so bad today"			

 Irrational Performance Beliefs
 M (SD)
 95% CI

 Demandingness
 18.63 (3.04) [17.94, 19.32]

 Low frustration tolerance
 18.92 (2.67) [18.31, 19.53]

 Awfulizing
 19.03 (2.92) [18.36, 19.69]

 Depreciation
 19.68 (2.55) [19.10, 20.27]

iPBI-2; Turner & Allen, 2018



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