

# Triad of Anxiety: A Qualitative Analysis of Anxiety in Collegiate Athletes in Nursing Programs



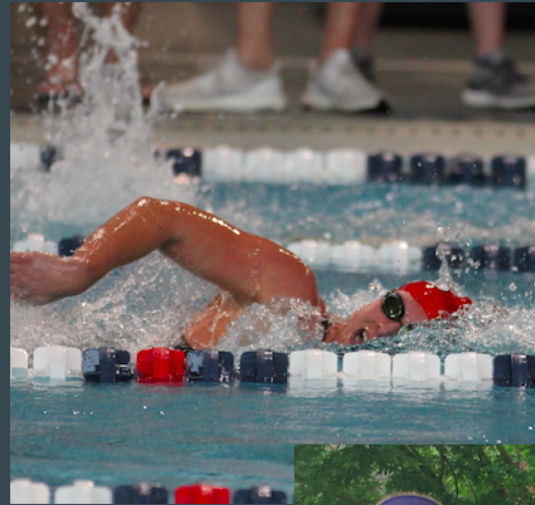
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# Significance

- Age of Anxiety (Vasconcelos et al., 2017)
- Anxiety in Athletes
- Anxiety in Nursing Students
- Perfectionism
- Nursing Student-Athletes uncovered by current research



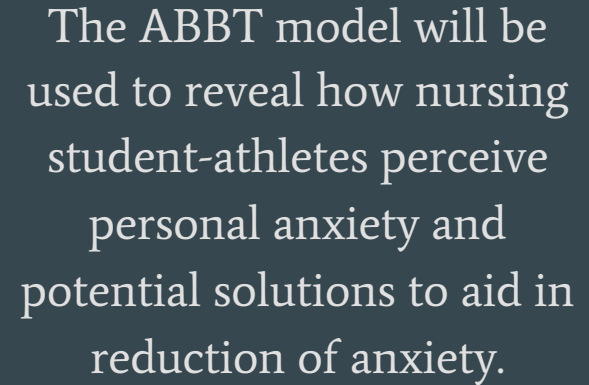
(Strober, Otto, Pescheck, Becker, & Stoll, 2007); (Gross & Hen, 2004);  
(Rocha & Osório, 2018); (Dehghan-nayeri & Adib-Hajbaghery, 2011);  
(Anshel, Kim, & Henry, 2009)

# Purpose

1. Investigate the effects of nursing school and athletics on an individual's perception of their anxiety
2. Determine if perfectionism is also a factor in enhancing one's anxiety
3. Examine the participants' thoughts on how their coaching staff and professors can reduce high levels of anxiety in nursing student-athletes



## Roemer and Orsillo's Acceptance Based Behavioral Therapy (ABBT) model for Generalized Anxiety Disorders



(Treanor, Erisman, Salters-Pedneault, Roemer, & Orsillo, 2011); (Roemer & Orsillo, 2002)



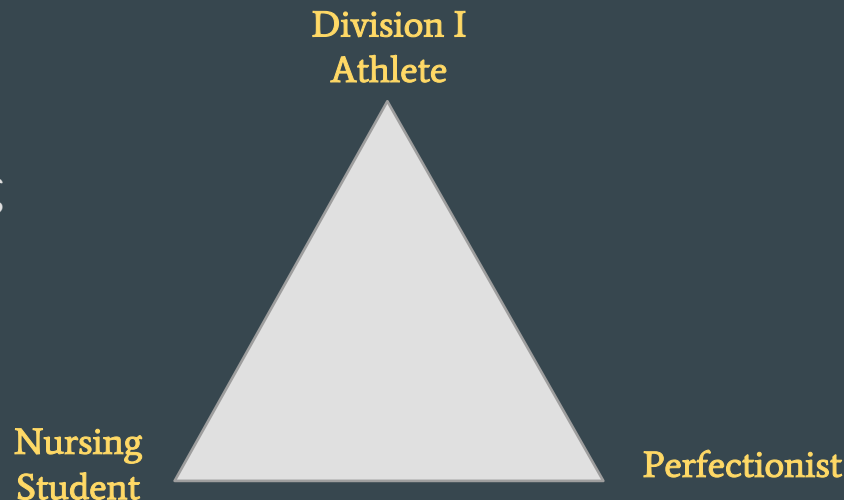
# Research Questions



1. What impact does anxiety have on a nursing student-athlete?
2. How does perfectionism affect a nursing student-athlete's anxiety?
3. How can coaches and professors aid in the reduction of anxiety in a nursing student-athlete?

# Hypothesis

1. There is a triad of anxiety when considering a nursing student-athlete
2. The individual who experiences the triad will struggle with symptoms of anxiety
3. Data from the interviews will support Roemer and Orsillo's ABBT model for anxiety



# Research Design

- Qualitative design
- Constructivist paradigm
- Phenomenological approach
- Purposive Sampling
  - Inclusion Criteria
- Informed Consent



# Interview Process

1. Are you a male or female?
2. How many years have you been/were you in the nursing program while also competing in a division one sport concurrently?
3. What sport did you/are you competing in?
4. What does anxiety mean to you?
5. What role does nursing have in your definition of anxiety?
6. What role does your athletic endeavors have in your definition of anxiety?
7. How does perfectionism influence your anxiety?
8. What can coaches do to aid in the reduction of an athlete's anxiety?
9. What can nursing professors do to aid in the reduction of a nursing student's anxiety?
10. Overall, prior to being a nursing student-athlete to now, how has your anxiety changed?

# Participant Information Gathered

- 7 participants
- All female
- Lacrosse, Cheerleading, and Swimming
- Program standing
  - 1 graduate
  - 4 in final year
  - 2 in second year



# Data Analysis Strategy

- Open Coding

- Phenomena experienced

- Athletic events
    - Time management
    - Tests
    - Comparison
    - Expectations
    - Exhaustion
    - Pressure
    - Loss of Control
    - Perfectionism
    - Act of Adjusting
    - Act of Blocking
    - Act of Worrying

# Data Analysis Strategy

- Selective Coding

Perceived Threats	Internal Experiences	Problematic Relationship with Internal Experiences	Experiential Avoidance
Athletic Events Comparison Time Management Tests Expectations	Exhaustion Pressure Loss of Control	Perfectionism	Adjusting Blocking Worrying

# Perceived Threats

- Time Management

- Student 2:

- *“So, from a time perspective, swimming and practice and being away at meets takes up time away from your studies. Doing it together [swimming and nursing] is what gets me, because the times that I am not studying I find myself really anxious”*

- Student 3:

- *“Nursing is the king contributor to my anxiety from all the time that it takes...it’s just a huge time commitment”*





# Internal Experiences

- Pressure

- Student 4:

- *“With athletics there is a lot of pressure to be the best in my opinion...You want to do all you can to perform well and so there is always that constant pressure of competing, doing well, and being the best you can be.”*

- Student 5:

- *“Nursing school radically changed my perspective of anxiety. I constantly felt pressure: all the time.”*

# Problematic Relationship with Internal Experiences

- Perfectionism

- Student 5:

- *“There is always a desire to succeed and you know make A’s in the classroom, and as an athlete win your races at competitions. It is kind of just an intrinsic pressure that is naturally occurring in people who are perfectionists....For me, I think that, because I didn’t want to be just good enough, I wanted to be perfect at both of those things and feel like I was doing a good job, that whenever I had hiccups it really brought me down mentally so it added way more anxiety--like fuel to a fire.”*

# Experiential Avoidance

- Adjusting

- Student 3: *“I think that the stressors have increased because as you progress in nursing school it gets much harder, but I think at the same time I have learned to deal with it better.”*

- Blocking

- Student 4: *“...a lot of times I will get overwhelmed with myself or my work and think that it’s too hard and I just can’t do it anymore.”*

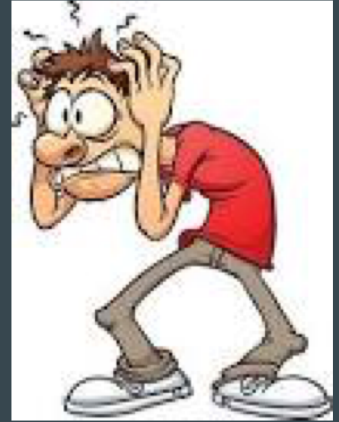
- Worrying

- Student 5: *“I was so emotionally drained and constantly worrying about nursing school.”*

# Discussion

## Triad of Anxiety

- Increased anxiety and distress
- Experience all three negative internal experiences
- Utilized unhealthy coping mechanisms--blocking and worrying



# Discussion

**RQ #1:** What impact does anxiety have on a nursing student-athletes?

- Endured significant distress and experienced feelings of exhaustion, pressure, and loss of control

**RQ #2:** How does perfectionism affect a nursing student-athlete's anxiety?

- Data signified a difference in anxiety levels of perfectionists and non-perfectionists

**RQ #3:** How can coaches and professors aid in the reduction of the nursing student-athlete's anxiety?

- Coaches: clear communication, flexibility, and knowledge of anxiety
- Professors: Availability and preparation

# Implications and Recommendations

- Topic of discussion and intervention
- Further research
- In depth analysis of perfectionism and anxiety



# Conclusion



- Triad of Anxiety
- Support of the ABBT Model for Anxiety
- The Key Differentiating Factor:  
Perfectionism
- Takeaway Suggestions
  - Coaches & Professors
  - Nursing Student-athletes

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