

**The Sport Body Image Project: Exploring Body Image Among Athletes in
Newfoundland and Labrador**

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Abstract

Athletes are at greater risk of developing body image issues that can lead to eating disorders, compared to those who don't compete in high-level sports. Both male and female athletes experience pressures to obtain a certain body ideal within their sport and a certain body ideal within society. To date most body image research has focused on female athletes and very few sport-specific body image programs exist in Canada. This thesis aims to understand the experiences of five men and five women athletes with body image in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), Canada, through the use of digital storytelling (DS). In this qualitative study, participants completed a two-day workshop where they learned about DS, partook in a focus group, and created their own stories. Data collection consisted of digital stories, focus groups, and individual interviews. The data was analysed through a critical feminist standpoint theoretical lens. Four main findings emerged from the data: body image development is influenced by sport culture and society, body ideals are expressed through sport success, sport is a vehicle for "healthy body" discourses, and there is a need to reimagine the sport body. The results of this study will help to highlight concerns among athletes and lead to further prevention methods within the sporting environment.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my parents, Joseph and Laurie Vanden Elzen. Thank you for supporting me, inspiring me to do my best and believing in my potential throughout my whole education. Even though we were provinces apart for my undergrad and graduate studies, I could always count on a thoughtful phone call, a funny email, or a surprise letter in the mail to raise my spirits and motivate me to keep working hard.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Body image concerns have become quite common within Western society (Ferguson, 2013). Grogan (2016), defines body image as “a person’s perceptions, feelings, and thoughts about his or her body” (p. 4). Body dissatisfaction occurs when these perceptions are negative, often involving an apparent “discrepancy between a person’s evaluation of their body and their ideal body” (Grogan, 2016, p. 4). Research has shown that the prevalence of body dissatisfaction in males and females has increased over the last 25 years (Cash, Morrow, Hrabosky & Perry, 2004; Dakanalis et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2013), contributing to increased psychosocial concerns such as: low self-esteem, impaired sexual functioning, increased risk of eating disorders, and increased risk of depression and anxiety (Cash et al., 2004; Dakanalis et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2013; Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999; Wiederman, 2002). Research studies have suggested that this increase in body image dissatisfaction can be, in part, attributed to the influence that mass media has on our society (Dakanalis et al., 2015; Perloff, 2014; Rodgers, McLean & Paxton, 2015).

With constant access to media and images of what culture has deemed the “ideal” body type, a relationship has been found between thin-idealized images in magazines and body dissatisfaction within young girls and women (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008). The majority of fashion and style magazines display pictures of celebrities embodying this “perfect” image, creating the idea that women need to look a certain way to be considered successful, beautiful or sexy.

Men and young boys are also subject to societal pressures to obtain the “ideal” male body. Instead of a drive for thinness, males are told to be muscular (Yanover & Thompson, 2010). This pressure can lead to body dissatisfaction in males and in some extreme cases, the development of a psychological body disorder called muscle dysmorphia (Dakanalis et al., 2015). Muscle dysmorphia (MD) is when someone believes they look less muscular or ‘smaller’ than they really are (Murray et al., 2012) and can cause excessive exercise behaviours, increased social physique anxiety, rigid dietary practices, and the use of anabolic-androgenic steroids (Murray et al., 2012; Leit, Gray & Pope, 2002). This research suggests that the pressures to obtain the “ideal” male muscular body have similar negative and serious impacts on men as the thin-ideal has on females (Leit, Gray & Pope, 2002).

In recent years, there has been more research looking at the impact that images of celebrities and peers on social media sites, specifically Facebook and Instagram, have on a person’s body satisfaction (Brown & Tiggemann, 2016; Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015.) A social media trend called “fitspiration” has emerged which shows images that are designed to inspire people to exercise and eat healthy in order to obtain an “attractive” fit body (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). These images are often of women, who all have a similar body shape of being relatively thin but toned (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). Even though this type of figure is more muscular than the thin-idealized women in fashion magazines, it is still an unattainable “ideal” image for many women (Krane, Waldron, Michalenok & Stiles-Shipely, 2001) and “fitspiration”

images have shown to increase body dissatisfaction among viewers (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015).

Body image ideals also exist within a sport context. Depending on the sport, certain body types are preferred for optimal athletic performance (Byrne & McLean, 2001). It is common for both male and female athletes to have multiple body images, namely an athletic and a social body image (de Bruin, Oudejans, Bakker & Woertman, 2011; Krane et al., 2001; Loland, 1999). An athletic body image can be defined as the internal image one has of his or her body and the evaluation of that image within their sport (Greenleaf, 2002). The social body image refers to how one feels about one's body in everyday life (de Bruin et al., 2011). Athletes struggle with different levels of body satisfaction depending on the situation they are in because they tend to measure themselves in relation to the predominant body ideal of their sport as well as the popular body ideals within society (Loland, 1999).

Past research studies have explored the possibility of athletes having an increased risk of developing body image issues and eating disorders compared to those who don't compete in high level sports. Firstly, athletes are under pressure to obtain an ideal body according to what society has deemed as desirable, but they are also under pressure to maintain an athletic physique to be successful in their sport (Byrne & McLean, 2001). This can prove difficult especially when the sport demands a different body type than what society has set as the beauty standard. This is when multidimensional body image issues among athletes occur. Depending on the sport, the athlete may feel confident in an athletic context rather than in everyday life, or vice versa. For example, in a study

conducted on female rugby players and body satisfaction, the women felt more comfortable with their bodies in an athletic situation rather than a social situation (Russell, 2004). In contrast, a similar study on gymnasts found that the athletes felt more confident in a social setting but referred to themselves as “fat” in their sport (de Bruin, Oudejans & Bakker, 2007).

Secondly, athletes have frequently been described as being perfectionistic, goal-oriented, competitive, and intensely concerned with their performance (Wilmore, 1995). These characteristics have commonly been associated with success in athletics but are also risk factors that have been linked to individuals with eating disorders (Byrne & McLean, 2001). Finally, elite athletes typically compete during their adolescent and early adulthood years which is the same time that eating disorders are most likely to be developed (Byrne & McLean, 2001). This puts the athletes at an increased risk of body image issues and eating disorder development.

To date, research studies that have looked at the relationship between athletes and body image prevalence have focused almost exclusively on female athletes. It’s a common misconception that since males are less frequently diagnosed with eating disorders, that they are unaffected by body dissatisfaction and other related disorders (Melin & Araújo, 2002). This may be the reason why few studies have examined male athletes and body image. Yet within the last decade, the difference in eating disorder prevalence between males and females has significantly changed (Goltz, Stenzel & Schneider, 2013). Twenty years ago, the ratio of males to females being diagnosed with anorexia nervosa was 1:15 (Goltz, Stenzel & Schneider, 2013). In recent years, this ratio

has become 1:4 in the general public and 1:2 among athletes (Schaal et al., 2011). When looking at the very few sport-specific body image programs in Canada, most of them focus on female athletes. Research that helps to understand gender differences with body image in sport will not only help address an important gap in the literature but could also help to inform the development of gender specific body image programs.

To address this important gap in the literature, this qualitative study will focus on understanding the experiences of athletes with body image in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). Recently, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador addressed some priority areas concerning mental health services related to eating disorders; one of which was sport. In response, this research study was created to help shed some light on this priority area. With the help of an arts-based research method called digital storytelling (DS), participants in this study had an opportunity to use traditional oral storytelling, combining images, videos, audio, text, and music to create a personal, first-person narrative (Cunsolo Willox, Harper & Edge, 2013). From past studies, DS has been identified as being an effective method for participants to communicate an experience or issue that may be difficult to conceptualize through an interview (Drew, Duncan & Sawyer, 2010). Participants have the freedom to highlight what they believe is important to share from their story. This allows them to decide what direction they want the research to take, which adds a more personal touch to the results of the research (Drew, Duncan & Sawyer, 2010).

The aim of this study was to analyze the impact that sport participation has on body image among male and female athletes. This study was originally guided by two

inter-related research objectives that focus on process, DS content, and viewer outcome. These objectives were to; 1) identify and analyze the benefits and barriers of the DS process in exploring body image among athletes, and 2) evaluate, analyze and compare tone and content of digital stories while paying attention to gendered nuances.

After the data was collected, the objectives of the study shifted based on a lack of participant interest. Out of the ten participants within this study, only three fully completed their digital stories and all three were women participants. This made it difficult to thoroughly explore the second objective. Therefore, only the first objective was addressed within the research and only the verbal aspect of the stories contributed to the data. This will be further explained in the manuscript.

Thesis Format

This thesis uses a manuscript style format and organizes the information into five chapters, plus the references and appendices. The first chapter provides an introduction to the topic, the importance of pursuing this particular research study, and an overview of how the research will be conducted. The second chapter reviews the past literature on body image and athletes, focusing on two different areas: 1) unique pressures athletes face, and 2) research designs in studies on body image and athletes. Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework, positionality of the author, methodology and methods used, data collection process, confidentiality measures taken, how the data was analyzed, and knowledge translation. The fourth chapter is the stand-alone manuscript which has been formatted for possible publication in the academic journal of *Body Image*. This qualitative study explores the lived experiences of athletes and the impact of sport participation on

their body image. The final chapter addresses the limitations within the study, suggestions for future research in the area of body image and sport, and future application of the research.

Defining Key Terms

This next section will define key terms found within the thesis. The list will provide a baseline understanding of these words but will be further addressed throughout the paper.

- ***Athlete*** is a seemingly common word that should be easily defined, yet within research the definition of an athlete is rarely discussed. For the purpose of this study, an athlete is defined as someone who has participated in organized sport.
- ***Body Dissatisfaction*** is a person's negative thoughts or feelings about one's body, often due to a perceived discrepancy between how the person evaluates their body compared to the image of the ideal body (Canpolat, Orsel, Akdemir & Ozbay, 2005; Grogan, 2016).
- ***Body Ideal:*** the definition of an ideal body has changed drastically over the course of history (Grogan, 2016; Volonté, 2017), and it is dependent on what a culture has identified as attractive and healthy. Within this study, we will be referring to Western culture's definition of an ideal body type. The body ideal for males is a slender and muscular physique and for females it's a slim and shapely figure (Grogan, 2016).
- ***Body Image*** is defined as a person's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about his or her body (Grogan, 2016), which can also be a reflection of the attitudes and interactions with people around them (Schilder, 1950).

- ***Critical Feminist Theory*** is a field of academic scholarship that analyzes gender relations, how gender relations are created and experienced, and how we think or do not think about these gender relations (Flax, 1987).
- ***Digital Storytelling (DS)*** is a participant-led, arts-based research method that illustrates a personal, first-person narrative using pictures, artwork, music, audio, video-clips and text (Cunsolo et al., 2013).
- ***Story Circle*** is a part of the digital storytelling workshops and it is similar to a focus group setting. The purpose of a story circle is to create a safe and welcoming space for the participants to share the first draft of their personal stories and to receive feedback on the overall flow of their story and the main themes they have chosen (Gubrium, 2009).
- ***Thin-Ideal*** is the current ideal body type found within Western culture and has been promoted largely by the fashion industry and social media outlets (Grogan, 2016).

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

This next section will review the literature on body image and athletes with two different focuses. The first part will highlight the findings within the literature, specifically the unique pressures athletes face that can contribute to body image concerns. The second part of the literature review will focus on the methods used in the literature on body image and athletes.

Part 1: Unique Pressures for Athletes

This section will be an overview of the literature related to the unique pressures that athletes experience that can affect their body image, specifically related to coaches, peers, and the uniform.

Body Image Pressures from Coaches. Past literature has highlighted the influences that coaches have on their athletes. In their positions of power, the relationships coaches have with their athletes is considered a critical one where a coach can affect an individual's sense of safety, trust, and fulfillment of needs (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). Much of the literature is inconsistent with the athlete's point of view on their coach and the type of influence they have or had on them. In studies on current athletes, many of them expressed their coaches being supportive and creating a healthy environment, whereas in studies on retired athletes, there was more information about the emotionally abusive relationship they had with their coach, which in theory could threaten the psychological well-being of the athletes (Gervis & Dunn, 2004).

Stirling and Kerr (2013) conducted a study that looked at the perceived effects of an emotionally abusive coach by interviewing retired athletes who had been exposed to

this type of relationship. From these interviews, common themes emerged showing that these abusive relationships increased the athletes' anxiety, and decreased their mood, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and body satisfaction. This type of response was not always found when asking about the relationship that athletes have with their coach. Krane et al. (2001) found that female athletes spoke very positively of their coaches claiming that they created a healthy and supportive environment for their players. From this study, the coaches were never described as being abusive in anyway. The athletes commented on the fact that their coaches would only be concerned with their athletic performance rather than their weight. Yet, they did mention that if their athletic performance was being negatively impacted due to their weight (either over or under), their coach would confront them and address this issue. In these circumstances, the literature has found that it is rare for coaches to provide appropriate guidance to their athletes on how to properly lose or gain the required weight (Beckner & Record, 2016). This uncertainty often influences athletes to participate in unhealthy behaviours such as restricting (or binging) food, and excessive exercising (Heffner, Ogles, Gold, Marsden & Johnson, 2003), which have been shown to actually decrease athletic performance (Ray & Fowler, 2004).

These types of behaviours are seen as normal training practices in certain sports such as wrestling and boxing where weight class is apart of competition (Soban, 2006). In a study on high school male wrestlers, Soban (2006) discovered that coaches taught and encouraged their athletes to participate in maladaptive training practices before competition in order to lose weight and drop a weight class. These extreme behaviours included excessive exercise in layers of clothing and literally starving themselves. If the

athletes met their weight loss goals, their coaches gave them praise and “allowed” them to eat; but if they failed to meet their goal, they were told to keep exercising and fasting (Soban, 2006). Athletes would continue to push themselves until they reached the certain goal.

In this research, athletes had mixed feelings about the role their coaches played in how they viewed their bodies. This inconsistency within the data, could be due to a number of different variables. One point that was consistent throughout the literature was that bodies are a common topic of interest when it comes to sport participation. Coaches seem to take it upon themselves to enforce an expectation of their athletes to achieve and maintain a certain body type (Beckner & Record, 2016; Krane et al., 2001; Sterling & Kerr, 2013). The literature addressing the pressures that coaches place on their athletes does not mention the possible long-term effects that this can have on an athlete’s body image. In future research, it would be important to hear from retired athletes and how their current perception of their body has been shaped by the influences of past coaches.

Body Image Pressures from Teammates. Much of the literature has suggested that teammates can be influential in how an athlete views their own body (Beckner & Record, 2016; de Sousa Fortes, Ferreira, de Oliveira, Cyrino & Almeida, 2015; Hausenblas & Carron, 2000; Hausenblas & Downs, 2001; Reel, Petrie, SooHoo & Anderson, 2013). Because of the competitive nature of sport, athletes will often be pitted against one another for playing time or competition opportunities (Beckner & Record, 2016). Often times, when athletes do not receive the opportunities they desire, they will compare themselves to their teammates who are getting opportunities. Depending on the

sport, there is usually an “ideal” body type that is seen as beneficial for performance. Athletes have identified that teammates with this desired body type will be given more opportunities than athletes who do not meet these bodily requirements (Beckner & Record, 2016), which can evoke envied comparison between teammates. In some cases, this type of comparison has been deemed positive in that it encourages athletes to push themselves to work harder and improve their skill in their sport (Bowers, Martin, Miller, Wolf & Speed, 2013).

In a study by Hausenblas and Carron (2000), they aimed to look at the potential positive and negative influences that teammates had on eating and dieting behaviours among their fellow teammates. With a sample of both female and male varsity level athletes, the results of this qualitative study showed that about 30% of athletes reported their teammates having a positive influence on their eating and dieting behaviours. Whereas about 10% of the athletes reported negative influences from their teammates. The results of this study demonstrated that only a small number of athletes felt influenced by their teammates to participate in dieting behaviours, and when it did occur, the majority of these influences were positive, healthy and non-damaging to their self-esteem.

The literature has also suggested that teammates may indirectly trigger disordered eating habits among athletes (Muscat & Long, 2008). When being apart of a team, athletes will spend a lot of time with one another which may result in adopting similar habits or behaviours. In a 2010 study, athletes most frequently reported their teammates as being the main contributor to weight pressures (Reel, SooHoo, Petrie, Greenleaf, &

Carter, 2010), yet in another study many claimed to have never spoken with their teammates about their body image and weight due to fear that they wouldn't understand their concern (Beckner & Record, 2016). Therefore, this leads one to assume that athletes may be influenced by their teammates purely through observing their dieting and exercise behaviours and comparing their different body types. Research by de Sousa Fortes et al. (2015) on Brazilian male athletes, showed that athletes often adopted the same disordered eating habits as their teammates if they were to witness or hear about their weight loss strategies. This seemed especially common when the teammate was seen as successful in their sport (de Sousa Fortes et al., 2015). Therefore, athletes will often associate these disordered eating habits with athletic achievement and strive to do the same as their teammate (de Sousa Fortes et al., 2015).

Whether teammate influences are more often positive or negative has yet to be clarified in the research. Differences in how female and male athletes evaluate their bodies and the bodies of their teammates is another gap in the literature. For future research, it will be important to study the impact that team dynamics have on an athlete's body image perceptions as well as the role that gender may play in how an athlete responds to body image pressures from their teammates.

Body Image Pressures from Team Uniform. The uniforms that athletes are required to wear for certain sports, have been found to make athletes hyperaware of their weight and body image (Steinfeldt, Zakrajsek, Bodey, Middendorf & Martin, 2013). It has been demonstrated that in aesthetic sports where the appearance of an athlete relates to the success of their performance, the risk of these athletes having body image issues

and developing disordered eating habits is heightened (Reel et al., 2013). Athletes who compete in these types of sports – such as cheerleading, gymnastics, and figure skating, commonly wear uniforms that are more revealing, making them feel that all of their perceived bodily flaws are on display in front of the spectators (Reel et al., 2013; Steinfeldt et al., 2013). In some instances, female athletes felt that because they were wearing a revealing uniform, their bodies were being sexualized rather than actually being appreciated for their athletic abilities (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimer & Kauer, 2004). A study on NCAA female volleyball players, addressed the fact that when wearing their spandex uniforms sparked objectifying comments from spectators during their games, making them feel uncomfortable and also distracting them from the play (Steinfeldt et al., 2013).

In some instances, the sport community may argue that wearing these types of revealing uniforms is a part of the sport and will enhance their performance. For example, swimmers commonly believe that having a smaller and tighter swim suit will prevent drag and encourage a streamline effect while swimming (Reel & Gill, 2001). Therefore, swimmers usually wear suits that are 2 (or more) sizes smaller than what they would typically wear. The swimming community also believes that having lower weight and body fat is associated with an increased performance (Reel & Gill, 2001). This type of attitude in addition to wearing tight swim suits, has shown to be related to higher levels of social physique anxiety in some swimmers, increasing their risk for disordered eating habits (Reel & Gill, 2001). Similarly, a study has found that female volleyball players have normalized the fact that wearing spandex uniforms will increase their performance

by allowing them to move quickly and eliminate the number of net calls (Steinfeldt et al., 2013). Many of the volleyball players claimed to be uncomfortable with the uniforms at first, but once they realized the functionality of it, they grew to accept the tight uniforms. However, some athletes are unable to overcome the idea of being exposed in their uniform. Thompson and Sherman (1999) found that female athletes will sometimes stop playing a sport all together because of a fear of the uniform they may have to wear.

In the research, it is clear that uniforms contribute to body image concerns. Athletes sometimes cultivate unhealthy body comparisons to teammates who they perceive look “better” in the uniform than them (Torres-McGehee, Monsma, Dompier & Washburn, 2012) and coaches are often accused of buying uniforms smaller in size to encourage their players to lose weight and look a certain way (Steinfeldt et al., 2013). These situations show that the unique pressures that athletes experience, are all interconnected. What the literature has yet to identify is how these pressures overlap one another, and if athletes recognize each of these pressures as contributing factors to body image concerns. There is also no literature on how uniforms impact male athletes.

Body Image Pressures from Society. According to de Bruin et al. (2011), athletes are highly affected by societal pressures of body image ideals. It is common for these sociocultural ideals surrounding the body and athletics to be internalized, which claims to be the main factor that causes disordered eating in athletes (de Sousa Fortes et al., 2015). Within Western culture, women are subject to a great deal of pressure to conform to the thin-ideal of feminine beauty (Harper & Tiggemann, 2008). The thin-ideal is the focus of thinness as a desirable female body type (Becker & Record,

2016). Males are also under social pressures to obtain the “perfect” body of having a muscular figure (Yanover & Thompson, 2010). As athletes, they tend to measure themselves in relation to the predominate body ideal of their sport as well as the dominant ideal body within society (de Bruin et al., 2011; Loland, 1999). This often causes athletes to experience different levels of body satisfaction within these two contexts (de Bruin et al., 2011).

In a study by Russell (2004), female rugby players perceived their body as being functional and positive for their sport. But within a social context, their satisfaction with their body decreased, as their strong, muscular bodies did not meet feminine beauty demands according to Western society (Russell, 2004). One of the athletes felt uncomfortable with her height, the size of her legs, and the width of her shoulders in a social setting, while these characteristics were identified as important to her success in rugby (Russell, 2004). Comparatively, a study done on gymnasts showed that within daily life they felt confident with their body, but in a sports context, they had a negative outlook of their body (de Bruin, Oudejans & Bakker, 2007). This conflict between a female body for sport and a socially acceptable female body may negatively impact athletes’ self-esteem, health, and self-presentation (Kane & Lenskyj, 1998).

In sports where leanness and low weight are considered important (de Bruin et al., 2011) to athletic performance - such as cheerleading, synchronized swimming and gymnastics, these athletes appear to have a more negative athletic body image than a social body image. The strict bodily demands on these athletes leads them to believe themselves as fat in their sport (de Bruin et al., 2011). Whereas a thin and lean body type

represents our cultural body ideals and fits within our socially constructed definitions of femininity and beauty (Krane et al., 2001; Loland, 1999; Russell, 2004). However, in sports where strong, muscular bodies enhance performance, or in sports that are traditionally male dominated, this may cause a conflict in the female social body image (Krane et al., 2001). Female athletes struggle with how they should interpret their bodies when social media promotes a small and toned female body as acceptable, but the athletic body is usually muscular and large.

Female athletes competing at high level sports have been shown to have lower self-esteem, have high levels of body dissatisfaction, and be at higher risk for eating disorders compared to nonathletes (Bissell, 2004). Yet, in a study by Krane et al. (2001), NCAA Division 1 college, female athletes explained how they felt positively about their bodies and empowered through competing in their sport. In a focus group setting, the athletes felt that during their competitive season, they felt more confident and more positive about their bodies in daily life (Krane et al., 2001). They attributed this to their regular training and healthy eating habits. These athletes also experienced a positive relationship with food, where they didn't feel guilty about the amount they ate when they felt positive and empowered about their bodies. Nevertheless, these athletes still felt the social pressures to have the ideal body type. Even though they felt confident in their bodies, they were quick to point out their apparent flaws. In this context, their eating and exercising practices were altered. If they exercised, they gave themselves permission to eat; and if they ate too much, they used exercise as a punishment.

In the literature, research explored how female athletes have multidimensional body image concerns, but few studies have considered such a concept for male athletes. In future research, it will be important to address this gap within the literature. It will be interesting to see if males have different levels of confidence depending on whether they are in a social setting or sport setting. This information will also help to inform how males react to body image and how sport-specific body image programming could be developed for male athletes.

Summary of Unique Pressures. Throughout this section of the literature review, the results were inconsistent when looking at the impact that these unique pressures had on an athlete's body image. There were many different variables that could have contributed to this and within the current study, similar results did occur. This particular area of research also focused a lot on just the female athlete experience and not so much on the male athlete experience. Because of this, it will be important for future research to include both male and female athletes to expand this area of the literature.

Part 2: Research Design in Studies on Body Image and Athletes

This section provides an overview of key components of the research designs used in research related to body image and athletes. It focuses on participant characteristics, recruitment strategies, and methods used within the literature.

Participant Characteristics. Past studies done on athletes and body image issues have been more focused on female athletes than male athletes (Beckner & Record, 2016; de Bruin, Oudejans & Bakker, 2007; de Bruin et al, 2011; Greenleaf, 2002; Green & Pritchard, 2003; Krane et al., 2001; Reel & Gill, 2001; Russell, 2004; Steinfeldt,

Zakrajsek, Carter & Steinfeldt, 2011). Society places pressures on women to achieve the “ideal” body type of being fit and thin (Beckner & Record, 2016). Research has shown that females have a more “negative body image evaluation, stronger investments in their looks, and more frequent body image dysmorphia” than males (Cash et al., 2004, p.1082). Female athletes in particular, face unique body image pressures within society and their sport. The cultural body image ideals and views on what is considered more masculine or feminine can contribute to body image concerns. Traditionally, masculinity is linked with physical attributes that embody power such as muscularity and virility, whereas females are traditionally viewed as passive, weak, and graceful (Greendorfer, 1998; Krane et al., 2001). Since the sporting world is a male dominated culture, the attributes needed to be successful as a female athlete often fall into the category of being masculine (Ross & Shinew, 2008). This creates a struggle for the female athletes whether they want to be successful in their sport or be perceived as attractive in society.

On the other hand, past research has shown little focus on male athletes and body image concerns. While it is believed to be less common for men to struggle with eating disorders (Beals, 2003), men are influenced by what society has deemed as the “ideal” body type; a masculine (V-shaped) physique, height, and muscularity (Parks & Read, 1997). When emphasis is placed on conforming to these masculine norms, it is common to find more health risk behaviours and fewer health promotion strategies (Mahalik, Levi-Minzi & Walker, 2007). According to Green and Pritchard (2003), males are often dissatisfied with their body image but in different ways than females. In a study looking at body image perceptions and satisfaction among male and female athletes, it was shown

that there was no difference in body satisfaction between sexes, except for the fact that males wished to have larger body regions, whereas females sought smaller body regions (Stewart, Benson, Michanikou, Tsiota & Narli, 2003). This is an indication that body image issues do occur within male athletes and should be more widely explored.

The age of participants is an important consideration in research related to body image and athletes. Depending on the type of study reviewed, the age of the participants ranges from 12 years old up to 58 years old. Studies have shown that the most vulnerable age for body image concerns and eating disorder development starts during puberty (Croll, 2005) and can continue to occur into their early twenties (Byrne & McLean, 2001). Therefore, it is an important demographic to study in terms of prevention and intervention strategies.

Recruitment Strategies. The recruitment strategies used in past studies are important to consider because it can help inform this current study on the best ways of reaching out to the athlete population. The most popular strategy for recruitment was to contact a person of authority such as coaches, teachers, parents, physicians, dieticians, or psychologists to be given permission to have their athletes or students involved with their study (de Bruin, Oudejans & Bakker, 2007; de Bruin et al., 2011; de Sousa Fortes et al., 2015; Hausenblas and Carron, 2000; Steinfeldt et al., 2011). This tactic was most commonly used when the athletes were under the age of 18 and it did seem to be an effective way to get in contact with the athletes and to get participants for their studies. Some other recruitment tactics used in past studies included speaking to university students in their classes (Krane et al., 2001), putting up posters around campus (Beckner

& Record, 2016; Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008), asking people who had participated in previous studies (Krane et al., 2001; Russell, 2004), using snowball sampling technique by having participants recruit other participants (Krane et al., 2001; Russell, 2004) or through purposive sampling (Greenleaf, 2002). Being aware of these popular recruitment strategies, has helped to shape the tactics used in the current study. A strategy that was rarely found within the literature was the use of social media outlets for recruitment. Facebook pages and Twitter accounts have become popular with many different demographics and age groups; therefore, it was an important avenue to use while promoting the study.

These past studies also addressed the challenges of recruiting athletes. Overall, there were two main issues. Firstly, athletes often have very busy schedules with training, competitions and school, and don't usually have time to participate in studies or their coaches don't allow them to be a participant (de Sousa Fortes et al., 2015). Secondly, the topic of body image can be sensitive for some people to address, and it often deterred athletes from participating in studies (Beckner & Record, 2016; de Bruin et al., 2011; Hausenblas and Carron, 2000). Keeping these particular issues in mind were important when conducting the current study and figuring out the best ways of avoiding these types of challenges as much as possible.

Data Collection Methods. The majority of research conducted on athletes and body image issues has been collected through quantitative methods (de Bruin, Oudejans & Bakker, 2007; de Bruin et al., 2011; de Sousa Fortes et al., 2015; Green and Pritchard, 2003; Huddy, Nieman & Johnson, 1993; Hausenblas and Carron, 2000; Muth and Cash,

1997; Reel & Gill, 2001; Steinfeldt et al., 2011; Stewar et al., 2003; Ziegler et al., 1998).

The most common data collection methods used are questionnaires and bodily measurements such as skinfold thickness, weight, and height. The questionnaires are typically standardized self-reported tests such as EAT-26 (Eating Attitudes Test), or DMS-15 (Drive for Muscularity Scale). These types of questionnaires have psychometric properties, meaning they have been tested for their reliability and validity in order to trust the results that the questionnaires produce (Sandy, 2013). However, when it comes to eating disorders, self-reported assessments have demonstrated poor representations of the individual's body image perceptions and eating habits (Fairburn & Beglin, 1990). Studies have shown that by using standardized measures like these self-reported questionnaires, the data is less likely to report high prevalence of eating disorders in athletes (Byrne & McLean, 2001). In contrast, some research studies create their own questionnaires that are not considered to have psychometric properties, and these have been shown to suggest greater eating pathology among athletes than the standardized tests (Byrne & McLean, 2001). In a study aimed at finding how the athletic body image leads to disordered eating in women athletes, the primary investigator created a questionnaire called the "Contextual Body Image Questionnaire for Athletes" (de Bruin et al., 2011). The results of this study showed that athletes seem to be specifically driven towards dieting and pathogenic weight control due to the demands of the sport that they play (de Bruin et al., 2011). Yet, it is hard to know whether this is an accurate statement as the questionnaire used did not consist of psychometric properties.

Quantitative research commonly uses bodily measurements of the participants to help back up their results from questionnaires. These measurements usually include; height, weight, body fat percentage, skinfold thickness, and body mass index. Depending on the study, it could be completed through self-reported measurements, or the primary investigator taking the measurements themselves. Body mass index (BMI) in particular, may not be an accurate measurement to use especially when it comes to a subgroup such as elite athletes (Ode, Pivarnik, Reeves & Knous, 2007). BMI is calculated by taking the body mass in kilograms and dividing it by height in meters squared (Ode et al., 2007). Body image studies have concluded that physical variables such as height and weight prove to be important factors when it comes to body image issues (Cash et al., 2004; Huddy, Nieman & Johnson, 1993; Steinfeldt et al., 2011). When comparing to the general population, athletes tend to have more muscle mass which can influence the BMI measurement to classify these individuals as overweight or obese (Ode et al., 2007).

Body fat percentage (BFP) has been identified as more precise when looking at athletes rather than BMI because BFP calculates the difference between fatty mass and muscular mass in the body (Huddy, Nieman & Johnson, 1993). Like previously mentioned, athletes tend to be more muscular than the regular population, therefore calculating the percent of fat athletes have on their bodies is possibly a more accurate calculation to examine when looking at body image issues.

Qualitative research methods have also been used in studies focused on body image issues within athletes such as focus groups and one-on-one interviews. These types of methods are less commonly used but provide “a deeper understanding of social

phenomena” (Gill et al., 2008, p. 292). Data collection tactics like interviews and focus groups, allow the participants to talk about their experiences rather than trying to fit their experiences into certain parameters within quantitative measures. One-on-one interviews are most effective when a sensitive topic is being addressed, whereas focus groups are more beneficial when a collective view on an issue is desired (Gill et al., 2008), especially when it’s a topic that is likely discussed in day-to-day life (Krane et al., 2001). Focus group interviews are seen as effective because they are more free flowing and it helps to diffuse the power between the interviewer and the participants (Krane et al., 2001). For example, in this study conducted by Krane et al. (2001), the female participants spoke about the universal issues of the pressures that society places on the thin-ideal body and how it affects them in their daily lives, as well as in an athletic context. Within the focus group setting, the women were able to lead the majority of the conversation by adding on to each other’s thoughts, as well as relating to each other’s experiences. The interviewer is present to oversee the focus group and to keep the conversation flowing, but they tend to sit back and observe while guiding the conversation in relation to the pertinent research questions.

In comparison, one-on-one interviews are more controlled by the interviewer which can create a different power dynamic between the interviewer and interviewee (Green & Thorogood, 2014, p. 110). The nature of this interview is well suited to understand the participant’s personal experiences and their perspective on the topic of discussion (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In a study by Beckner and Record (2016) on the influence of coach communication on female athlete body image and health choices, they

decided that one-on-one interviews were the most effective method for their data collection. Semi-structured interview style was used for this particular study, where a series of open-ended questions were asked that allowed for discussion between the interviewer and the participants (Green & Thorogood, 2014, p. 95). This type of interview is effective when looking for an in-depth understanding of the participant's personal experiences and views on a subject.

Further Research

This literature review suggests that there has been a significant amount of research conducted in the area of body image and athletes. Athletes are an important demographic to study because unlike the general population, they experience body image pressures within society as well as within their sport, which can result in multiple and complex body image concerns (de Bruin et al., 2011; Krane et al., 2001; Loland, 1999). For example, they may feel confident with their body in a social setting, yet they may feel insecure in an athletic context, or vice versa. This can cause athletes to develop eating disorders and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety (Thompson & Heinberg, 1999).

The unique pressures athletes face influence how athletes come to relate to and feel about their bodies. The power structures that are in place within a sporting environment can be particularly influential in an athlete's life. Coaches are at the top of this hierarchy, and it has been demonstrated that a coach can have an effect on the sporting environment for the athlete in positive and negative ways (Agliaia & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004; Krane et al, 2001). Teammates are next on the power hierarchy, as they can

be very influential among their fellow teammates. According to de Sousa Fortes et al. (2015), teammates can trigger eating disorder behaviours in other athletes by simply making comments about strategies they use for weight loss. Athletes will tend to adopt these strategies to reach the same bodily goals.

Much of the research to date has focused on current athletes - the majority being self-identified as female - and using either a survey method or an interview process for data collection. Research that engages with different athletes (i.e., athletes of different ages, gender, and competition level) and research that engages different research methods, is a notable gap. It is for this reason, this study endeavours to utilize an arts-based research method in order to explore body image experiences among athletes at a deeper level (Rice, 2014). Through digital storytelling methods, participants are able to express their personal stories in a new way through the use of images, music, and audio (Cunsolo et al., 2013). This research method gave the participants full artistic freedom to tell their story visually and orally, which moves beyond textual data collection. This study also engaged a gendered lens by paying attention to gender nuances that appeared in the stories created. This is an area within the research that has been largely dismissed. In order to properly inform sport-specific body image programming, this study offers a deeper understanding of how gender plays a role in body image for athletes.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

Theoretical Framework

For this qualitative study, a critical feminist theory was used to understand the experiences of athletes and body image concerns with a focus on how gender differences inform the athlete's story. Feminist theory analyzes how gender relations are constituted and experienced within a hegemonic male society (Flax, 1987). Through feminist theory, the theory of gender socialization emerged which focuses on the social construction of gender. Simone de Beauvoir sums up the idea of gender socialization by claiming, "one is not born, but, rather, *becomes* a woman" (as cited in Butler, 1988, p. 519). This eludes to the idea that one may be born female, but they only become a woman through a process of acquiring feminine traits and learning feminine behaviours that are deemed as appropriate behaviours by parents, peers, and culture (Mikkola, 2017). This can also be applied to the male population. Thus, gender is understood as the "mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (Butler, 1988, p. 519). This theory has helped to make sense of gender nuances that have emerged when analysing the data.

The feminist standpoint theory has also provided an important lens for this research. Sandra Harding (1987), identifies feminist standpoint theory as an epistemological position that claims women have a "broader perspective on social reality because of their own understanding of gendered oppression and that the subjectivity of the researcher is crucial in the research design" (Underwood & Dillion, 2004, p. 67). Standpoint theory puts an emphasis on the importance of individual perspectives and

point of view within the research (Collins, 1997). As a part of this, acknowledging the positionality of the researcher has shown to produce knowledge that is less distorted and more visible than knowledge that erases partiality (Underwood & Dillion, 2004).

Identifying the researcher as on the same critical plane as the participants can help with having their voices be heard within the research.

Throughout this research study, the critical feminist standpoint theoretical approach was useful for the research as a way of structuring my lived experience as part of the findings. As a researcher who identifies as an athlete, it has been important for me to recognize my history with body image. To help navigate being the primary investigator with a personal connection to the research, I looked towards Dr. Carla Rice for guidance. In an article by Carla Rice (2009), she reflects on the strategies of ‘embodied engagement’ that she employed to help her “critically consider the significance of [her] bodily history” (p. 246) and how it would affect her interpretations and interactions with the women in her study. As the researcher, it has been important for me to reflect on my own body history as an athlete and how this may have affected my position in this research. During the digital storytelling workshops, I would acknowledge my own body image struggles with the participants as a way to help them further reflect upon their own body image concerns and vulnerabilities. Putting myself in a vulnerable situation, especially as a researcher who is in a position of privilege, can provide a deeper understanding of power within social situations (Rice, Chandler, Harrison, Liddiard & Ferrari, 2015). With sharing my body image experiences, I wanted to help the participants understand where I come from as a researcher and as an athlete so that they would feel

more comfortable opening up and being vulnerable with their own experiences. As a female, my own testimony may not be relatable for male athletes. Therefore, on top of my own experiences, I would also share personal experiences of professional male athletes who have been open with sharing their issues with body image.

Positionality

In February of 2017, I retired from playing basketball. I started when I was 8 years old and finished off after five years playing at the varsity level representing my university. Throughout my career, there have been many ups and downs. Reflecting on it now, body image had an impact on my experience. Within the last five years, strength and conditioning became a big part of my everyday routine, along with sport specific training. Because I was exercising all the time and more than I was ever used to, my body changed, and I became very fit. I was able to lift heavier weights and push my body to its limits, which made me feel empowered and accomplished with my body and its abilities. I also became more confident in how my body looked in social situations. However, within my sport, I was not as confident with my body. Compared to my fellow teammates and opponents who played the same position as me, I was considered small and weak. A post player is usually the tallest and biggest player on the court and plays near the basket. I have always been smaller in stature and not overly tall, especially compared to the other post players at this level of basketball. Therefore, I felt that I had to work harder in order to get the same opportunities as my teammates who were naturally built for the post position.

The body of a “true post player”, being big and tall, does not necessarily fit into the ideal social body image for females. However, this was the ideal body type of my position in basketball and I was jealous of my teammates who did have the ideal “post” body. Since my body did not look like a post player’s, I dealt with body image issues not only in my sport environment but within a social environment as well. I became hyper critical of every part of my body and I took offense when people called me skinny or weak because I worked tirelessly on building my strength and increasing my muscle mass. I sensed that no matter how much work I put into my sport I was constantly being replaced by new recruits who naturally fit the body type of a post. After three years of inconsistent playing time and putting all my efforts into basketball, I became discouraged and I started to hate my body because I felt that it was holding me back from athletic success. I lost all confidence in my ability to play basketball, so much so that I even avoided being involved with coaching younger players out of fear that I would be labelled unknowledgeable due to my lack of playing time on my team. I also avoided mentioning to people that I played university level basketball because I felt that I wasn’t a true member of the team since I didn’t play much. During my last two years of varsity basketball, I spent the majority of it injured – suffering from a broken wrist and three concussions. These injuries prevented me from practicing and competing with my team. Initially I was frustrated and upset that I couldn’t participate, but after awhile I felt thankful for these injuries. Being injured gave me a legitimate reason for not playing because in the past my only excuse had been that I wasn’t good enough.

I never understood how much sport had affected the perception I had of my body until starting this project. When reflecting on my time as an elite athlete, I was shocked when I realized the obsession I had with obtaining the “perfect” body for my sport. Now that I am retired from varsity sport, I have noticed a shift in my obsession – I am now concerned with having a “perfect” body according to what society has deemed as ideal. I am more critical of how my body looks and I am less inclined to lift heavier weights out of fear of building too much muscle. Because of my past experiences with my body image as an athlete, I understand the positives and the negatives that sport participation can have on an athlete’s perspective of their body. I have therefore been able to relate to the participants within this study on a deeper level.

Methodology/Methods

Digital Storytelling. For this research study, I used Digital Storytelling (DS) as the primary method of data collection. DS is a participant-led, arts-based research method that illustrates a personal, first-person narrative with the use of photographs, artwork, music, audio, video-clips and text (Cunsolo et al., 2013). Past research has shown that an arts-based research method is beneficial in reaching a deeper understanding of [the participant’s] lived experiences (Rice, 2014). Digital storytelling has multiple different purposes such as: to empower participants through reflection and growth, to educate and raise awareness about issues presented in the stories, to inform public policy and advocacy, and to provide arts-based data to support public health research and evaluation efforts (Gubrium, Hill & Flicker, 2014). Creating digital stories will help to disrupt generalizations that society makes about certain populations, especially those who are

considered marginalized (Alexandra, 2008). DS will also shed light on the individual experiences of people within these marginalized groups and exposes various social issues and exclusions that affect these individuals (Wexler, Eglinton & Gubrium, 2014).

Participants in this study used digital stories to express their experience with body image in sport. The tone and content of the digital stories was evaluated, analyzed and compared while paying attention to gender nuances. No other related studies were found within the literature, therefore the effectiveness of this method of research has to also be evaluated through individual interviews with the participants.

Participants. The target population for this study were self-identified women and men who were currently competing or had retired from participating in organized sport and considered themselves athletes. They also had to be at least 18 years of age. Before the recruitment processes began, ethical approval from Memorial University's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICHER) was obtained. This study involved possible psychological risks for the participants due to the sensitive topic that they explored and shared with myself and the other participants. To reduce this risk, I conducted a "participant contract" at the beginning of the workshop. This involved asking the participants to create a list of all the things they needed to feel safe and respected. The participants gave examples like, "Listen intently", "Keep everything said during the workshop confidential", and "Respect each other's body image journeys". These were all written down and stayed posted through out the duration of the workshop. As well, participants were only asked to share what they are comfortable with talking about, and they were given resources and a number to call if they needed to talk more.

Once ethical approval was obtained, the recruitment processes began. Posters and invitation letters were electronically distributed to relevant organizations, such as SportNL, Eating Disorder Foundation of NL, The Body Image Network and the Health Innovation through Promotion and Practice (HIPP) Collaborative at Memorial University. Posters were also displayed in public areas around St. John's such as the Works, recreation centres, and throughout Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) campus. Social media was used to post announcements through the project's Facebook and Twitter pages. I also spoke publicly to undergrad classes and at workshops for teachers to get the word out about my study.

During the recruitment process, I had a difficult time getting men to take part in the two-day workshop. Therefore, I adjusted the data collection method for the men participants to individual interviews instead of the digital storytelling workshop in order to have a male perspective in my study. The interviews were semi-structured and the five men who participated were between the ages of 18 – 35 and had competed or were currently competing in sports such as; swimming, track, football, weight lifting, cycling, and triathlon. Three of the athletes had competed or were still competing at a varsity level in their sport, one was purely recreational, and one had experienced professional level of competition overseas. I was successful in recruiting athletes who were women to participate in the two-day workshop. The participants were five women between the ages of 20-23 and who were currently competing or had competed in sports such as; volleyball, swimming, weight lifting, figure skating, track and field, yoga, and soccer.

One of the athletes is currently competing at a varsity level, two athletes used to compete at a provincial level, and two were recreational athletes.

At the beginning of the workshop, the women athletes were given a consent form (see Appendix A) that outlined the purpose of the study, the expectations of the participant, the participant's rights, and the possible risks and benefits of being apart of the study. Due to the sensitive nature of this research topic, the consent form also listed resources and important organizations that the participants could contact if they wish to have more information on body image or if they needed to speak with someone for support. Participants were also made aware that if they started to feel uncomfortable, they were free to leave the study at any point during the process without any negative impact, and their digital stories would have been removed from the data. The men were given the same consent forms before starting their individual interviews.

Data Collection

For this qualitative study, the data collection occurred between the months of June and July 2017. There were four methods utilized when collecting the data: digital stories, story circle transcripts, one-on-one interviews, and research field-notes. Digital storytelling was the main method of data collection even though I only ended up with three of them (see limitations for details on why). The women created their stories over a two-day workshop. The first day of the workshop began with an overview of the DS process, with a focus on the seven elements of DS: point of view, dramatic question, emotional content, voice, soundtrack/music, economy, and pacing (Lambert, 2006). I then

discussed with the participants how to make their story flow nicely by following a story map that included four different parts; the beginning, the problem, the solution, and the ending (see Figure 1). Examples of digital stories created through the StoryCentre were also presented to the participants to show how impactful the final product can be and to give them an idea of what they would like their story to look like. The second part of the workshop involved the participants creating the script for their digital story which began with the story circle. The purpose of the story circle was for the participants to share their

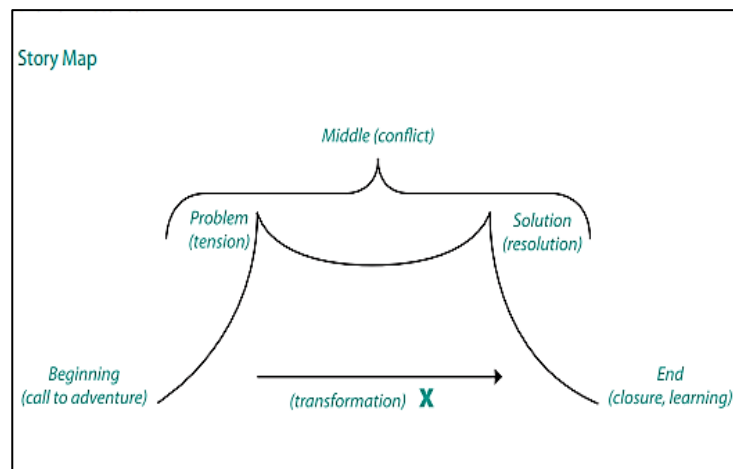


Figure 1.0. Story Map used during DS workshops. Source. Ohler, J. (2007). *Telling your story: A handbook for putting the story into digital (and traditional) storytelling*. Juneau, AK: Brinton Books.

experiences with body image as an athlete, and to help each other brainstorm ideas for their digital stories within a safe and comfortable space (Gubrium, 2009). Story circle has also been used to build general group themes that provide insight to commonalities among their experience, which can be used to help fuel advocacy and public dialogue. The story circle is similar to a focus group setting, yet it is much more participant driven with their stories and ideas guiding the dialogue. Semi-structured questions were used to help prompt discussion among the participants (see Appendix C). The story circle was

recorded and transcribed verbatim. These transcripts were the second source of data collection.

The second day of the workshop focused on the participants creating their digital stories. They were first given a tutorial on how to use the software and then they were assisted with the final touches of their script and recording their voice-over for their story. Originally, there was going to be time at the end of the workshop for all of the participants to show their final product to the rest of the group but due to some athletes needing more time to finish, this last part never occurred.

After the workshops were completed, participants had the opportunity to participate in an individual interview. These interviews were semi-structured and took place at a time that worked best for the participant. Within the interviews, participants were asked to discuss their experiences and the process of creating their digital stories, along with any feedback about the workshop (see Appendix D). Again, these interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, so that the conversations could be used as the third source of data collection.

Throughout the workshops and at the end of each day, the researchers recorded detailed field notes about their observations. This has been useful when analysing the transcriptions from the story circles and remembering important moments from the workshops that have contributed to the data.

The data collection process for the male participants, consisted of one-on-one interviews and field notes. The semi-structured interviews asked questions about the

athlete's personal experience with body image, their views on the role of body image in sport, the impact that society has on sport and body image, and some insight into why the male participant was unable to participate in the DS workshops (see Appendix E). These interviews were also recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Confidentiality

For this study, confidentiality has been an important topic to address with the participants during the workshops. Since the workshops were meant for the athletes to share their personal experiences with body image, there was an agreement of confidentiality among the participants in order to respect one another's privacy. They were also ensured that their identity and any information they shared would be protected. Each participant was asked to choose a pseudonym name to be referred to throughout the data analysis in order to further protect their identity. Now that the workshops are completed, participants own full rights to their stories and have complete control over whether they want to share their story with the public or not.

Now that all of the data has been collected, only the research team (myself and my supervisor) will have direct access to any of the data which is being stored in my supervisor's office. This information will then be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the social science lab at Memorial University.

Data Analysis

The data analysis has consisted of 1) five pages of field notes taken by the primary investigator through out the DS workshops noting important interactions between participants, conversations had, and personal reflections, 2) three completed digital

stories, 3) thirty-three pages of transcripts from the story circles, and 4) one hundred and five transcript pages of the individual semi-structured interviews. The story circles, individual interviews, and digital stories (see Appendix G) were transcribed verbatim. Before analysis could occur, the fully transcribed individual interviews were emailed to the participants to ensure validity and accuracy of the transcription. With multiple methods of data collection used within this study, triangulation occurred to ensure that the results were valid. Triangulation helps to improve the accuracy of a researcher's findings by collecting multiple different types of data which represent the same phenomenon (Jick, 1979). Peer debriefing also occurred regularly between the first author and the second author to enhance the rigour of the data analysis (Yi et al., 2018; Creswell, 2017)

A thematic analysis was used to find common themes within the data. Themes within qualitative research are concepts that reoccur throughout the data and can help to “summarize and organize the range of topics, views, experiences, or beliefs voiced by the participants” (Green & Thorogood, 2014, p. 210). A thematic analysis requires the author to familiarize themselves with the data set to identify the codes, develop categories, and create the larger concepts or themes of the data collection (Green & Thorogood, 2014). For this study, Lichtman's three c's approach of codes, concepts and categories was used (Lichtman, 2010), which is a content-driven, thematic analysis approach that is useful for exploratory studies (Cameron, 2014). This approach consists of multiple steps in order to create the final themes.

The first step of the data analysis consisted of reading through each of the transcripts and becoming familiar with the content of the data. The second step of the

analysis was the initial coding which occurred through a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti. This is a program that helps qualitative researchers with the coding process by organizing the data and constructing the codes that are assigned to the transcripts. During this stage, codes are assigned to single words, full sentences or complete statements to help summarize the content of the data (Saldaña, 2015). This initial coding process produced 528 codes. The third step consisted of finding common patterns among the codes to create categories. In collaboration with my supervisor, the codes were reviewed and grouped into 24 categories. The final step of the data analysis consisted of summarizing the categories into larger concepts or themes. My supervisor also assisted during this stage to help create the final four themes to properly represent the data.

Knowledge Translation

This study was built on past research in the area of body image concerns and athletes, in order to understand the experiences of athletes with body image in NL. This study has addressed some of the gaps within the literature. The first being the underrepresented group of male athletes. Most of the past research has focused on female athletes and their experience of body image within sport and society. Within this study, both males and females were recruited in order to explore possible differences between how males and females express body image.

The second gap within the literature was the lack of divergent qualitative methodologies, such as arts-based research. The majority of past research has also used either survey methods or an interview process to collect the data. This project was one of

the first within this research area to use DS for data collection. During the individual interviews, it was important to receive feedback from the participants about this research method to conclude whether or not DS is an effective method for this demographic. The hope was that digital storytelling will prove to be a beneficial method for athletes to express their experiences within their sport, so that DS can be used among elite athletes to further understand body image issues as well as other difficult aspects within their athletic careers.

Chapter Four: Manuscript

The Sport Panopticon: A critical examination of athletes' experiences with body image

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Abstract

Athletes are at greater risk of developing body image issues that can lead to eating disorders, compared to those who don't compete in high-level sports. To date most body image research has focused on female athletes and very few sport-specific body image programs exist in Canada. This study aims to understand the experiences of athletes in Newfoundland (NL), Canada, with sport-related body image using qualitative methodology. The data was collected from 10 athletes (five men and five women) over a two-day workshop and one-on-one interviews. Data was analysed through a critical feminist standpoint theoretical lens. Four main findings emerged: body image development is influenced by sport culture and society, body ideals are expressed through sport success, sport is a vehicle for "healthy body" discourses, and there is a need to reimagine the sport body. The results of this study will help to highlight body image concerns among athletes and lead to further prevention methods within the sporting environment.

Keywords: arts-based research; qualitative research; digital storytelling; male athletes; female athletes; body image; sport body

Introduction

Body image concerns have become quite common within Western society (Ferguson, 2013). Research has shown that the prevalence of body dissatisfaction in males and females has increased over the last 25 years (Cash, Morrow, Hrabosky & Perry, 2004; Dakanalis et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2013), contributing to increased psychosocial concerns such as: low self-esteem, impaired sexual functioning, increased risk of eating disorders, and increased risk of depression and anxiety (Cash et al., 2004; Dakanalis et al., 2015; Ferguson, 2013; Thompson & Heinberg, 1999; Wiederman, 2002). Studies have suggested that this increase in body image dissatisfaction can be, in part, attributed to the influence that mass media has on our society (Dakanalis et al., 2015; Perloff, 2014; Rodgers, McLean & Paxton, 2015).

Society has defined “ideal” body types for both males and females. For females it is a slim body and for males it’s a slender and moderately muscular physique (Grogan, 2016). It is common to see models and celebrities who “portray” the ideal body type and are highlighted in fashion and style magazines and throughout social media. Exposure to these images has shown to cause body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem among both males and females (Grogan, 2016; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008).

Body image ideals also exist within a sport context. Depending on the sport, certain body types are preferred for optimal athletic performance (Byrne & McLean, 2001). It is common for both male and female athletes to have multiple body images, namely an athletic and a social body image (de Bruin, Oudejans, Bakker & Woertman, 2011; Krane, Waldron, Michalenok & Stiles-Shipley, 2001; Loland, 1999). An athletic

body image can be defined as the internal image one has of his or her body and the evaluation of that image within their sport (Greenleaf, 2002). The social body image refers to how one feels about one's body in everyday life (de Bruin et al., 2011). Athletes struggle with different levels of body satisfaction depending on the situation they are in because they tend to measure themselves in relation to the predominant body ideal of their sport as well as the popular body ideals within society (Loland, 1999).

Past research has explored the possibility of athletes having an increased risk of developing body image issues and eating disorders compared to those who don't compete in high level sports. From these studies, three common risk factors have emerged. Firstly, athletes are under pressure to obtain an ideal body according to what society has deemed as desirable, but they are also under pressure to maintain an athletic physique to be successful in their sport (Byrne & McLean, 2001). Secondly, athletes have frequently been described as being perfectionistic, goal-oriented, competitive, and intensely concerned with their performance (Wilmore, 1995), which are all characteristics commonly associated with success in sport but are also risk factors that have been linked to individuals with eating disorders (Byrne & McLean, 2001). Finally, elite athletes typically compete during their adolescent and early adulthood years which is the same time that eating disorders are most likely to be developed (Byrne & McLean, 2001). This puts the athletes at an increased risk of body image issues and eating disorder development.

To date, research studies that have looked at the relationship between athletes and body image prevalence have focused almost exclusively on female athletes. It's a

common misconception that since males are less frequently diagnosed with eating disorders, that they are unaffected by body dissatisfaction and other related disorders (Melin & Araújo, 2002). This may be the reason why few studies have examined male athletes and body image. Yet within the last decade, the difference in eating disorder prevalence between males and females has significantly changed (Goltz, Stenzel & Schneider, 2013). When looking at the very few sport-specific body image programs in Canada, most of them focus on female athletes. Research that helps to understand gender differences with body image in sport will not only help address an important gap in the literature but could also help to inform the development of gender specific body image programs.

The overall purpose of this study was to understand the lived experienced of athletes in NL and how sport participation influenced their body image through the use of Digital Storytelling (DS), and interviews. Originally, the visual and verbal aspects of the digital stories were to be analyzed as the main source of data but given some challenges with participant recruitment and completion of stories, only the verbal aspects were included in the analysis along with transcripts from the interviews and story circles. Few related studies were found within the literature, and thus this study will help to expand the literature on understanding body image development in sport.

Methods

Theoretical Framework

A critical feminist standpoint theory was used to help understand the experiences that the athletes had with body image concern, specifically focusing on how gender

differences informed the athlete's story and keeping in mind the positionality of the researcher. Feminist theory analyzes how gender relations are constituted and experienced within a hegemonic male society (Flax, 1987). Through feminist theory, the theory of gender socialization emerged which focuses on the social construction of gender. According to Simone de Beauvoir (1953), "one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman" (as cited in Butler, 1988, p. 519). This means that a female (or male) is not born, but they become a woman (or man) through learned behaviours and acquired traits from what parents, peers, and culture have deemed appropriate for each gender (Mikkola, 2017).

Digital Storytelling

Digital Storytelling (DS) was originally the primary method of data collection. DS is a participant-led, arts-based research method that illustrates a personal, first-person narrative while using traditional oral storytelling combined with photographs, artwork, music, audio, video-clips and text (Cunsolo Willox, Harper & Edge, 2013). Past studies have identified DS as being an effective method for participants to communicate an experience or issue that may be difficult to conceptualize through an interview (Drew, Duncan & Sawyer, 2010). DS has also been shown to reach a deeper understanding of [a participant's] lived experiences (Rice, 2014). Participants have the freedom to highlight what they believe is important to share from their story. This allows them to decide what direction they want the research to take, which adds a more personal touch to the results of the research (Drew, Duncan & Sawyer, 2010). The participants of this study used digital stories to express their experiences with body image in sport.

Participants

The participants for this study were self-identified men and women athletes, 18 years or older, and who were currently competing or have retired from playing a sport. Recruitment happened through posters around the University campus and the city, on social media, and speaking with undergrad students before their classes as well as members of relevant sport organizations around the city. Overall, 10 athletes (five women and five men) took part in of this study. The women's ages ranged between 20-23 and were currently competing or had competed in volleyball, swimming, weight lifting, figure skating, track and field, yoga, and soccer. The men were between the ages of 18-35, and had been or were currently competing in swimming, track and field, football, weight lifting, cycling and triathlon.

Procedure

The university's ethics committee approved all procedures within this study. The original data collection process consisted of a two-day digital story workshop, where participants learned about digital storytelling, participated in a StoryCircle (comparable to a focus group setting) and created their digital stories with the technology that was provided. The first author participated in webinars offered by StoryCenter that provided guidance for facilitating DS workshops. StoryCenter is the hub for digital storytelling in North America, and it provides education opportunities for people to learn, create and share their knowledge and experiences through this arts-based method (StoryCenter, 2016).

After the workshops, the participants were invited to participate in an individual interview. Some issues arose while recruiting male athletes to participate in the two-day workshop. Therefore, the data collection method was adjusted for the male participants where they only participated in the individual interviews instead of the full DS workshop.

The workshop and the interviews were facilitated by the first author, and assistance was given during the workshops by a PhD candidate within the Faculty of Education who had experience facilitating DS workshops in the past. This study involved possible psychological risks for the participants due to the sensitive topic. To reduce this risk, a “Participant Contract” was created to begin the workshop. The women participants identified what they needed to feel safe and respected throughout the workshop. This list was signed by all participants and facilitators and remained posted for the duration of the workshop.

The DS process that was utilized in this study came from the StoryCenter. The first day of the workshop began with an overview of the DS process, focusing on the flow of a story. Participants were provided with a story map that included four different parts to help them form their story; the beginning, the problem, the solution, and the ending. Examples of digital stories created through the StoryCentre were shown to the participants to give them an idea of what the final product of a digital story looked like. Next, the participants created their script for their digital story which began with participating in the story circle. The story circle is similar to a focus group setting, yet it is much more participant driven with their stories guiding the dialogue. The purpose of the story circle was for the participants to share their experiences with body image as an

athlete, and to help each other brainstorm ideas for their own digital stories within a safe and comfortable space (Gubrium, 2009).

The last day of the workshops focused on the participants creating their digital stories. They were given a tutorial on how to use the software and then they were assisted with the final touches of their script and recording their voice-over for their story. Originally, there was going to be time at the end of the workshop for all of the participants to show their final product to the rest of the group but due to some athletes needing more time to finish, this last part never occurred.

Once the workshops were completed, participants were invited to participate in an individual interview. Within these semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to discuss their experiences and the process of creating their digital stories, along with any feedback about the workshop.

The individual interviews for the men participants were also semi-structured and consisted of similar questions that occurred within the story circle. Additionally, the men were asked why participating in the two-day workshop did not work out for them, so that adjustments could be made for future research studies.

Before any of the interviews or the story circles took place, participants signed consent forms. They were assured that their identity and any information they shared would be protected. Each participant was asked to choose a pseudonym to be referred to through out the data analysis to further protect their identity. Participants were also made

aware that they own full rights to their stories and have complete control over whether they want to share their story with the public.

Data Analysis

The data analysis consisted of three completed digital stories, 5 pages of field notes from the workshops, and 138 pages of transcripts from the story circle and the individual interviews. The story circles, individual interviews, and digital stories were transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word and DSS player and then uploaded to ATLAS.ti for data analysis. ATLAS.ti is a software used for qualitative research analysis that helps organize the data and create codes. Before analysis could occur, the fully transcribed individual interviews were emailed to the participants to ensure validity and accuracy of what had been transcribed.

A thematic analysis was used to find the common themes within the data. This analysis requires the researcher to become familiar with the data set in order to identify the codes, develop categories, and create the larger concepts of the data collection (Green & Thorogood, 2014). For this study, Lichtman's three c's approach of codes, concepts and categories was used (Lichtman, 2010). This is a content-driven, thematic analysis approach that is useful for exploratory studies (Cameron, 2014). This multi-step process was conducted by the first author and the author's supervisor. Once this process was completed, 528 codes, 24 categories and four main concepts were identified.

Results

The four themes that emerged were; 1) body image development is influenced by sport culture and society; 2) body ideals are expressed through sport success; 3) sport is a

vehicle for “healthy body” discourses, and; 4) there is need to reimagine the sport body. In the following section, these themes will be discussed and examples from the interviews and Story Circles will be given.

Body Image Development is Influenced by Sport Culture and Society

This first theme identified the many ways body image is influenced in sport and society. The theme had four different subthemes; adult influences, peer influences, uniform influences, and influences from the self.

Adult influences. Coaches and parents were identified as influential in athletes’ body image perceptions. It was clear that adult opinions about bodies can really impact an athlete’s perception of themselves. Participants identified how their coaches hold a lot of power over their athletes and that their comments can be hurtful and can cause a long-lasting impact on the athlete. For example, Caroline (swimmer) shared how negative comments from her mother and her coach was the beginning to her 10 year struggle with body image issues and eating disorders:

I would say I was probably 13 or 14 (years old) and my mom told my coach my weight and...my coach emailed back and said, “THAT IS TOO HEAVY”, in caps. I’ll never forget it! And I lost 12 pounds in 2 weeks. So, I went from 150[lbs] to 138[lbs] in two weeks because I starved myself and I was like, “I need to be thin!”

James (swimmer) spoke about the influence that coaches have over athletes and how throughout his career, he had seen many of his coaches make comments about athletes' bodies. He said he had coaches who told his whole team they had to lose weight, and sometimes these comments were also about athletes gaining weight. James discussed one of these situations he had witnessed:

It was the last year and we were at training camp and one of the swimmers was hospitalized and had like an extremely low blood pressure and was like delirious and anorexic. It didn't have to do with the coach that year but the coach the year before told him... it was actually a guy, told him that he needed to eat a sandwich and would always make sly and kind of gross remarks because he was a very small and petite guy. There were always remarks made like that, "You need to go eat. Why are you so small?" Anyways, it went the other way and he got even smaller and was hospitalized.

Participants also indicated that parents are very influential. Similar to coaches, when parents make negative comments towards their child, this can really harm the child's self-esteem and can impact them for a long time. Caroline experienced these kinds of negative comments from a young age, where her mother made her go to the gym to lose weight and kept a careful watch on everything that Caroline ate.

Every year for my birthday, my best friends would give me my favourite snacks which was the double stuffed Oreos and I loved it. But because I was so ashamed of everything I ate and how I felt so much judgement from my Mom, I would hide them under my bed and I would eat them at night. If my Mom found them she would give them to my step-Dad and tell him to eat them and say that “Caroline” doesn’t need them.

Peer influences. Participants spoke about how athletes commonly compare themselves and their bodies to their teammates or to their competitors. This is exemplified in a quote by Caroline.

I always compared myself to other people. And no, I never felt that teammates intentionally ever made you feel you had to lose weight or made you feel negatively, but like just looking at people who were thinner and didn’t have their body fat poking out or anything like that, I always felt that I had to be more like them. And if they were faster than me, that just made me want to lose weight more.

From a young age, it seems as though athletes are aware of sport specific body types and can be cruel to athletes who don’t fit into the “ideal” sport body type. Jérôme spoke about his time as a hockey player when he was in his early teens and how his

teammates would make fun of his body type but once he started playing football, his body confidence completely changed.

Interviewer – So would you say you had different levels of confidence at each stage [of your athletic career]?

Jérôme – Big time. Yeah so when I was playing hockey, I had a very poor body image because I was the fat guy on the team and it was obvious and everyone made fun of me for that. Then when I went to football, I wasn't. I was right somewhere in the middle. Then I started getting bigger and stronger, and it was great.

Uniform influences. The impact of the sport uniform was continually spoken about by the participants. This was especially true for the athletes who had to wear tight or revealing uniforms such as cyclists, swimmers and figure skaters. David, a competitive cyclist, spoke to this when he said:

The skin-tight suits were really hilarious. But I never ever felt super comfortable in the skin-tight suits because while everyone around me was fairly physically tiny, I was a bigger kid growing up. So, I always had the rolls popping out in the suits.

Wearing tight uniforms made the participants feel more pressure to have an ideal body type and they fell victim to other's opinions about their body shape. In the next quote, Brian addresses how he wishes his sport didn't require the tight uniform that it did:

I've had some people poke this (stomach) sometimes and be like, "Oh yeah I should fix my eating a bit more." Especially because you are wearing skin tight stuff. Sometimes I wish I could just do a sport in sweat pants.

Influences from the self. Participants spoke about how they were influenced by society's ideas surrounding bodies and gender norms. They spoke also how the "ideal" male and female bodies are often presented within mass media outlets and participants addressed how these images impact how they feel about their bodies. Brian articulated this well when he said:

The main media [message] is that the male body has to have low body fat and some musculature whereas the female one doesn't. So, when we were kids, I thought to be a dude you have to do weights and stuff, and all girls have to do is not eat. You know? That was my honest thought process in high school. I have to work at doing this, girls obviously do too, [but] by not eating, either way that sucks. I always thought about how I couldn't just be a skinny, slender dude, as

someone could be a skinny and slender woman. And I think that is still around. I'm pretty sure if you took the top 10 spreads on a magazine, it would still be musculature vs. no muscle and being thin.

Participants also addressed how society's definition of "ideal" male and female body types impact their own athletic body. Depending on the sport, athletes may obtain bodies that do not fit society's standards, therefore creating multidimensional body image issues among athletes. Participants went on to address the gender differences between how male and female athlete bodies are treated within sport. This difference, they said, is highly influenced by how society defines masculine and feminine traits. In the next quote, Nicole talks about how differently males and females are seen within sport:

Males are seen as these power houses, they are seen as these gods. Like, "Okay, you are so muscular, like you are superman." But if a girl who was powerlifting, if you were muscular and buff, and had these tree trunks for arms you would be seen as gross.

Body Ideals are Expressed Through Sport Success

The second theme from the data focused on the relation between sport-specific bodies and the idea of success within sport. Participants shared that participating in sport leads to a strong formation of an athlete's body identity. Within the interviews it was clear that this athlete body identity is dependent on the sport as well as the position the

athlete fills in that sport and it can have a positive and negative impact on one's personal identity. Sport-specific and position-specific body types were discussed within the interviews, and it was identified as being sometimes confidence boosting. For example Jérôme said:

During my third, fourth, and fifth year of playing I felt more dominant as a person because I was bigger than most people walking around on the street. You could look at me and you could tell, "Oh yeah, you play football." It was kind of that. So, you get associated with that and that becomes your body image of, "Oh yeah, you play football."

Achieving a sport-specific body, also was identified as being helpful in social situations. When the participants felt they looked the part, their sport became a part of their identity and made them feel special in certain situations. This is addressed by Brian in the next quote:

I used it [sport] as a way to have an identity. So, if you look like a cyclist, you are a cyclist. So that helps me walk into a party as something. It created a nice space suit, I suppose. So, if you walk into a party and say, "Hi I'm [Brian]," but most people would be like, "Oh! You're the cyclist! How was the race?"

Position-specific bodies that exist in each sport were explained within the interviews. David gave an example of the different position body types saying, "you got

taller and broader people that break the winds to lead folks out and the shorter and leaner people will go up the hills.” These position-specific, sport-specific body types are often influenced by genetics. Some people are naturally built to compete in certain sports and through training and practice their skills are only enhanced. However, the participants made a point of saying that not every athlete needs to have the “ideal” body for their sport to be successful at it. Participants identified how society can get caught up in identifying an athlete’s sport by their body type but there can be a lot more to an athlete’s success besides how their body looks. In the next quote, Zela addresses this concept while using Usain Bolt as the example:

I do think that some body types are just better for certain sports... even though Usain Bolt is tall, and you would never think he would be good at sprinting, he’s an exception I find...like he is unreal at sprinting, obviously. So, to a certain extent, definitely the body type would help in a particular sport. But it doesn’t mean that you can’t play that sport and you can’t excel at that sport, you know what I mean?

While sometimes body typing can be positive, participants also talked about the negatives. Occasionally, an athlete’s body creates an identity for them that resembles a certain sport and other times their body may not look like the sport they play. So, this can be challenging for athletes to deal with and as articulated by Marshal, can impact them in a negative way.

I think it [body image] plays a role in the sense that it can attract a lot of people in, but it can also push a lot of people out. I think that is because not every person's body is equal. I think they [athletes] leave the sport because they don't feel like their bodies are responding the way they wanted [their body] to or they feel really self-conscious around other people who are doing sports, and they feel like they have to compete with these other bodies that are looking more like the stereotypical ideal body.

Sport is a Vehicle for “Healthy Body” Discourses

Through out the interviews, participants often referred to people who were fit as being healthy. Yet, they also suggested it was common for athletes to push their bodies to the extreme and engage in unhealthy behaviours without anyone noticing. Societal assumptions surrounding “sport as health” can make it difficult for athletes to get the help they need for extreme behaviours. As explained by Brian, eating disorders are one of these issues that can hide easily among athletes and can make it hard to get help for someone who looks “healthy”.

So, sport is our culture's way of thinking that it is healthy to do the things that I did. I guess what I mean by that is there have been a bunch of times in my life when I was trying to get help and I thought, “Man I wish I had just picked up heroin instead, because it would be easier to get help.” I'm not trying to belittle people who have heroin addictions, but I shit you not, sometimes I just think that it would be a whole lot fucking easier because I would be able to get help a whole lot better.

Participants talked about how “health discourse” in society contributed to a focus on weight in sport. Throughout these interviews, the participants addressed that losing weight was never seen as issue within society, but as soon as someone gains weight, there's more negative attention given to that. Participants in the Story Circle showed how societal discourses have contributed to body harm.

Caroline – And I find that, even a few years ago I lost a bunch of weight and everyone would say, “Oh you look so thin, you look so much better”. But then its like... when you gain weight...

Zela – Like “You are beautifully thick”, no one says that!

Caroline – Yeah!

Zela – They only say, “You are beautifully thin”.

Caroline – They only talk (give compliments) if you are losing weight. But then behind your back they would say, ‘oh my gosh, she’s gaining so much weight’.

Zela – As a negative thing.

Caroline – Why? I don’t understand.

Nicole – Yeah. Why is that I have to be on the verge of dying for gaining weight to be an O.K. thing. Why is that its fine up until that point, but gaining weight is always looked at as a negative thing? Unless you need it like I did.

There is a Need to Reimagine the Sport Body

Participants strongly advocated for ways to change how body image is addressed within sport and among athletes. The participants came up with two common approaches: 1) awareness, and 2) education.

Awareness. Participants addressed how body image is not discussed within sport and often the participants felt alone in their struggle with their own body image. Without proper awareness surrounding this topic, participants felt that their issues with their bodies weren't normal. Like any mental health issue, talking about it creates awareness and reduces the stigma that surrounds it. James discussed the importance of awareness and continued research in this area:

I think its great that there is qualitative research being done and exploring it because body image in sport is very situational; sport, coach, athlete dependent, that I don't know if there will ever be enough research or awareness about it. But it definitely needs to become more positive rather than a negative touchy area.

Participants argued that increased awareness will also help eliminate the idea that male athletes don't struggle with body image. Throughout the interviews, this idea was discussed among the participants. For years, body image they said, has been centered around females and the imagery used was often super thin, young women, therefore this became the definition of body image and eating disorders. As mentioned by the participants, if people can't identify themselves in what they see around them (i.e. social

media), then it can lead to them struggling with body image issues. Participants said this is also a problem within sport. Rarely do we talk about positive body image development among athletes, especially male athletes. Even within this study, recruiting male athletes to participate was a challenge. During the interviews, Brian addressed this topic head on by saying: “they’re [male athletes] not going to speak up if there’s no space [to do so] but we also have to be aware of creating that space.” Through increased awareness, hopefully space will be created for both male and female athletes to ask for help and to also receive proper help when they need it.

Education. Another important aspect to body image practice within sport was the increased education surrounding this topic. Education will be vital to starting the conversation on body image among athletes and providing the tools that coaches, trainers, and parents should have to identify when an athlete is having issues and how to properly handle the situation. In the next quote, Brian provided a great example of how body image workshops with the adult figures within sport could open their eyes to the dangers of body image concerns among athletes:

We had a [social work] class awhile ago and we were talking about eating disorders and adolescent counselling. And one thing we discussed is the ways they purge because purge used to be like you would just stick your fingers down your throat and barf. But purge can also be running for three hours after you eat a full cake. There was someone in the room that was a coach and they said, “Oh never thought about that before.” I think part of it is helping coaches be in tune with what an eating disorder can sound like... not just look like. Because twice in my life I

looked like I had one but even then, that gets mixed with people labeling me as an endurance athlete.

Educating athletes about body image was also identified by the participants as being important for a couple of different reasons. For one, participants said if athletes are aware of what body image issues entail, they may be more likely to ask for help if they need it or to help other athletes who are struggling. Secondly, participants said teaching athletes tools they can use to overcome negative and harmful thoughts about their body may also decrease the prevalence of body image issues with athletes.

Participants also emphasized the importance of language when addressing body image. Some of the participants had experiences from when they were younger where a coach, parent or teammate used language about their body that negatively impacted them. James also thinks that if athletes are educated on the correct and incorrect ways to address body image, it may help them change their mindset when a coach says something negative to them or to actually correct their coach when they use that language:

Because then all of those people would be educated and aware and I think if a coach were to say something negative, they would be able to be like, “Woah, you are wrong. Its not that I’m wrong or that my body is wrong, its that you’re wrong. That’s not allowed.”

How a coach or trainer addresses an athlete’s body is very important and essential for the future development, confidence and long-term well-being of the athlete. Jérôme

gave advice regarding a situation like this in a sensitive but direct way. He gave his response from a coach perspective:

I mean you try to help them improve their performance and get in better shape because usually people who are overweight aren't going to be as fit as they could be. But you don't harp on the fact that they are over fat. Like you don't say, "Oh you have too much body fat. We got to get rid of that." I would just say, "We need to get you into better shape." So, the way you frame it, takes away from the weight or the size and just talk about performance I think everybody is fine.

Its important to note, that sports are very body centred. There is always a focus on how the athlete's body performs. So, when addressing an athlete's body, it needs to be done in a sensitive way. With continued education, and awareness, participants felt language will hopefully develop as well and facilitate a much more positive conversation with athletes.

Discussion

This study aimed at examining the lived experiences of athletes and how sport participation influenced their body image. The findings from this study reinforced past literature from this area of research, while also contributing some new insight into the relationship between an athlete's body image and their ideas of success within society. From the data, four themes emerged which all relate to the influence society and sport

have on an athlete's conceptions about bodies. In the following sections, each theme will be discussed in relation to previous literature on the topic.

Sport Culture and Society do Impact an Athlete's Body Image

Over the course of the DS process, the participants mentioned people or things which evoked body image insecurities and eating disorder behaviours. These influencers were; adults, peers, the uniform, and the self. Parents and coaches were identified as the adult influencers by the participants. The influences that coaches had on an athlete's body image was evident amongst some of the participants, especially the swimmers within this study. The swimmers had similar experiences of their coaches telling them or their teammates that they had to lose weight. This seemed to be a normal experience throughout both of their swimming careers. The woman swimmer even experienced this type of weight loss pressure from her mother, who supported the coach's request for her daughter to lose weight. These comments she received from her coach and her mother continued to impact her body image. This type of long term effect has also been seen within the research. McMahon and Penney (2013), found that when someone has a negative body experiences as an adolescence, this experience will continue to impact their lives, and their overall health and well-being as an adult (McMahon & Penney, 2013). Past research has also shown that athletes and their family members will often support the requests that coaches make of their athletes and normalize the behaviours required to achieve "perfection" within their sport (McMahon & Penney, 2013).

Participants identified that peers, which included teammates and competitors, contributed to body image development in both positive and negative ways. Participants

addressed that just seeing their teammate or competitor's bodies, elicited body image concerns in themselves. This would be especially prominent if their peer was recognized as being successful in their sport. The participants automatically associated their sport success to their body type. Similarly, within the literature, athletes who obtained the "ideal" body type for their sport were identified as being given more opportunities than their teammates who didn't obtain the bodily requirements (Beckner & Record, 2016), which was said to cause body envy. One of the male participants was teased by his hockey teammates because of his body type. Since he didn't have a stereotypical hockey body, he felt uncomfortable in that particular setting. But once he started playing football, he felt more accepted by his teammates because his body type was seen as "ideal" for that particular sport. Research has shown that body image perceptions will fluctuate depending on the context the individual is in (de Bruin et al., 2011; Loland, 1999; Russell, 2004), and in an athlete's case, this often means measuring themselves in relation to the ideal body type for their sport (Loland, 1999).

The impact of the sport uniform was commonly mentioned among swimmers and cyclists within this study, as causing body insecurities. Having to wear the tight and revealing uniforms, made them feel very exposed and vulnerable. The participants felt that while wearing their uniforms, people around them could see every part of their body which made them the subject of body-based opinions, especially from their coaches, peers, and other observers. This type of body-awareness can be explained through Foucault's (1977) theory of the panopticon. This is the idea that an athlete's body is under constant surveillance by their coaches, parents and sometimes peers. In past studies, swimmer's have shown awareness of this type gaze (McMahon & Penny, 2012), which

influenced self-monitoring of their weight. Within this study, the sport uniform was seen as an alternative way for coaches and parents to judge their athlete's bodies and determine if they need to lose weight. Participants agreed that their tight uniforms that exposed their bodies, allowed peers and adults within sport to feel it was acceptable to make comments on and about their bodies.

Lastly, the participants in this study talked about how they were influenced by society's ideas about bodies within sport and society, as well as gender roles. The majority of the participants were able to identify the differences in how male athletes are portrayed within society compared to female athletes. It was described by one of the female participants that male athletes are often seen as "power houses" and female athletes who are muscular are often seen as "gross". This can be related back to body ideals that society has created for males and females; a muscular physique for males, and a thin and toned body for females (Grogan, 2016). When females step outside of this mainstream body ideal and gain muscle mass, the female is seen as masculine and unattractive (Krane et al., 2001; Maguire & Mansfield, 1998). The female participants of this study were also aware of the stereotypical masculine sports and feminine sports. According to Koivula (2001), sports that are seen as graceful and nonaggressive, and provide beauty and visual pleasure are considered feminine sports. Sports that are labelled as masculine, present aggression and power as key characteristics (Koivula, 2001). Participants of this study were already aware of these gender stereotypes within sports and discussed how these stereotypes impacted their sport performance. For example, one of the female participants ended up dropping out of the sport because she was afraid that she would be seen as too masculine. Even though she enjoyed playing the sport and

excelled at it, she was influenced by society's ideas about gender roles and decided to stop playing rugby due to the sport's masculine characteristics.

Sport Success is Related to Ideal Body Image

It was clear in this study that body image influenced the athletes' identities. In some cases, participants said having an ideal body type for their sport helped boost confidence and their sport became a part of their identity. When someone within the general public was able to identify the sport that the participants played based off their body type, this seemed to mean that they had achieved success in their sport, which made them feel proud of their bodies and the sport they played. But the participants seemed to be offended if they were identified with the wrong sport based on their body. This can be explained through the concept of embodiment which has been proposed to help with positive body image (Menzel & Levine, 2011). Being involved in "embodying" activities, such as athletics, has been suggested to increase an athlete's sense of physical empowerment, body awareness, and overall physical competence (Menzel & Levine, 2011; Tiggemann, 2015). With the addition of public reinforcement that their bodies look "good" or are of the standard sport-body ideals, the athletes had an increased body image, a sense of belonging to the sport and a sense of success with the sport. On the other hand, the athletes felt annoyed when they were identified with the wrong sport and therefore, ended up questioning their abilities within their chosen sport.

Sport Culture Creates an "Ideal Healthy Body" Image

The participants in this study often referred to people as "fit and healthy" and that athletes were the epitome of health because of their discipline to exercise and their

assumed healthy eating habits. Due to these assumptions, the participants addressed how people are motivated to join a sport or continue competing in a sport to maintain a “healthy” lifestyle. But as identified by participants in the study, eating disorders and body image issues are easily hidden within an athlete’s body and within the sport culture. It is presumed that an athlete’s motivations are focused on improving their sport skill and physical abilities, therefore it is difficult to identify when their motivation turns into an unhealthy obsession. Participants spoke of personal struggles with eating disorders and body image issues. They addressed how most people didn't know they were struggling because their excessive exercise and eating behaviours were seen as usual for an athlete, and thus identified as healthy behaviours. One participant even said he sometimes wished he had been addicted to something that was considered unhealthy like heroin, because he felt that he would have received help much quicker. Similarly, one of the female participants had struggled with some health issues where she was uncontrollably losing weight, and none of her coaches, teachers, or peers had noticed until she was hospitalized for being ill. People assumed that since she was losing weight that it was a healthy thing. But if she had been gaining weight she felt she would have received people’s attention much quicker.

In understanding ideas of “health discourses” in sport, French Philosopher, Michel Foucault’s theory of biopolitics is a useful lens. Biopolitics is the idea that control is established within society by powerful institutions (Crampton & Elden, 2016). Institutions like sport, control how certain ideas become engrained in our culture in order to create positive contributing members of society. As part of this, striving for success in whatever we do blinds us from harm. Sport and society has created the idea that having

an ideal body is apart of being successful or rather that success is granted to those with ideal bodies. We see advertisements, news stories, and images on social media that tell us how we should treat our bodies and what our bodies should look like. When someone's body doesn't look like the ideal, they are seen as unhealthy and therefore seen as a failure. This is the reason why losing weight and participating in extreme exercise doesn't alarm people as much as gaining weight does because the latter are identified as successful behaviours and therefore seen as healthy.

The Sport Body Needs to be Reimagined

In order to shift the panopticon gaze and change how athletes come to monitor and regulate their body image, creating awareness and providing education about body image is critical. Participants noted that within sport, the topic of body image is sensitive to discuss and its often avoided because coaches, trainers, and teammates are unsure how to navigate this type of dialog. It was suggested by one of the participants to create social media campaigns surrounding the importance of positive body image in sport, similar to campaigns that companies like Dove have created for the general public. Currently, positive body image campaigns geared towards athletes rarely exist but with more awareness around this issue, it might help to reduce the stigma surrounding body image with athletes and encourage athletes to ask for help when they need it.

Increasing education was also suggested by the participants. Coaches, parents and athletes should be educated on the importance of a positive body image, how to identify when an athlete is struggling with their body image and the proper language to use when discussing bodies in sport. This will help parents and coaches to identify alarming habits

that their athletes may take part in and the appropriate language to use while addressing these issues. Athletes can also monitor their own behaviours with increased education and awareness of what may be damaging. Many times, an athlete could get lost in the obsession of improving their performance and be unaware that they are actually harming their body image perception through the process of athletic improvement. Helping athletes understand that some of their exercise and eating behaviours could be harmful, will allow them to make educated decisions about their athletic development paths. Providing education about proper language will also give athletes the awareness to know when a coach, parents or teammate uses damaging language towards them or another athlete. Having this education will give them the power to stand up against this type of behaviour and hopefully start a shift in the athletic world.

Limitations. This study had two main limitations: 1) recruitment, and 2) technology. The data collection required the participants to commit to a two-day workshop to create the digital stories and trying to get busy athletes to make time out of their schedules to participate was challenging. Many of the athletes who were interested in the study commented on the issue of committing to two days and with their personal training schedules, it wasn't a viable option for them. Out of the athletes who took part in the workshops, only three athletes completed the full study, while two athletes didn't finish their videos or contribute to the individual interviews. The recruitment and retention were challenging as a result of the methods.

Another recruitment limitation that existed was related to gender ideology. We were unable to recruit men to participate, so the only data that they contributed to was through the individual interviews. Many of the men explained that committing to a two-day

workshop was hard for their schedules and some also expressed the possibility of it being uncomfortable to open up about a sensitive topic in a group setting as it wasn't seen as masculine.

Lastly, the women athletes addressed the frustration they experienced with the technology they used to create the digital stories. Since they had never used this type of technology before, they found it hard to pick up within a day. For one participant, English was her second language which created some additional barriers when creating her script and explaining the technology process. It would have been helpful to have had enough facilitators at the workshop to have one-on-one assistance.

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Chapter Five: Conclusion

This final chapter will highlight some of the difficulties that occurred during the recruitment phase and how this impacted the results of the study. I will also provide suggestions for future research in the area of body image and sport, and possible future applications of digital storytelling with this demographic. These suggestions have been informed by past research, this current research study, and from my personal experiences of being an athlete with body image concerns.

Recruitment Difficulties

Throughout the recruitment process, I experienced difficulties recruiting participants to commit to the two-day DS workshops. While promoting my study, I had a lot of interest from both men and women who wanted to participate, but once they heard what my study entailed, many of the potential participants backed out, and majority of those who declined were men. Since much of the past research in the area of body image and sport is extremely female focused, I wanted to add more male perspectives to the literature. Therefore, I offered individual interviews to the men who had shown interest in my study to see if this was more appealing to them. As a result, the five men athletes committed to the one-on-one interviews. Given that this was a Master's thesis, there was also a time constraint on the research which contributed to recruitment difficulties as well.

During the individual interviews, I asked the men to talk about why they weren't able to participate in the workshops. Most of their responses were because committing to a two-day workshop was not realistic with their busy work, school, and training schedules. One of the men was also a coach within the community and he expressed

concerns about possibly being in the workshop along with some of his athletes, which he said would have made him feel uncomfortable and less willing to open up. This impacted my original objectives because I was aiming to evaluate and compare the tone and content of the digital stories that the athletes created while also paying attention to gender nuances. Since I didn't have any men create a DS, I was unable to fulfill this objective and therefore it was not included in my results.

Future Application

Many past studies looking at body image among athletes have focused on female athletes and athletes competing in sports that emphasize thinness and physical appearance. This current study has shown that men and women competing in a wide range of sports, can experience body image issues. Therefore, future research should explore body image among athletes who are believed to be at low risk such as; non-lean sport athletes, and male athletes (de Sousa et al., 2015; Gillen, 2015; Parks & Read, 1997; Thompson & Sherman, 2014). Further research should also focus on prevention and treatment measures for athletes who do struggle with body image and eating disorders (de Bruin et al., 2011; Littleton & Ollendick, 2003). From this study, athletes were highly influenced by what society perceived as successful, which impacted how they perceived themselves and others. I would challenge further research to investigate what informs society of these ideals of success and how it would differ depending on the culture. This could be an important aspect in understanding how to prevent athletes and the general public from experiencing issues with their body image.

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of athletes in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), Canada, through digital storytelling (DS) and how sport participation impacted their body image. This research has added to the growing literature on body image in sport, and the use of arts-based research methods such as digital storytelling (DS). From the data collection, the DS workshops proved to be an effective method for the women athletes to connect and support each other in their personal struggles. I believe that DS workshops would be an effective team building tool for athletes in the future. The workshops encouraged athletes to be vulnerable with themselves and to open up about their personal struggles. The women identified that the workshops created a special bond between the participants, and they had an unspoken understanding of each other. I would encourage the use of DS workshops not only for research purposes but also team building activities among women athletes.

The digital stories that were created during these workshops, were originally going to be the main source of data. Unfortunately, due to low numbers and the challenge of committing to two full days, only three digital stories were created which made it difficult to make them the main focus for the data. Yet, after watching these three stories, I believe that DS can still be an effective method for athletes to tell their personal stories and shed light on many different topics. Each story was unique to the individual and helped enhance the athletes' personal experiences with body image. The visual aspect of these stories along with the audio storytelling has proven to me as powerful and I think that if more athletes were to create digital stories on their experiences, it would help create awareness and promote change in certain areas of sport.

For the DS workshops, I was unable to recruit men to participate, therefore it is difficult for me to make conclusions about the effectiveness of this research method for the male population. But from the individual interviews with the men participants, I was still able to understand their experiences with body image. When it comes to being vulnerable and opening up about personal struggle, a group setting may not be the most welcoming situation for everyone. From these interviews, I learned that more resources need to be made accessible for athletes who are men. Having conversations with them taught me that men may struggle with issues in silence more than women. As researchers, we need to figure out how to effectively reach out to male athletes in a way that will encourage them to be open and vulnerable about their personal struggles and to feel comfortable asking people for help when they need it.

The data that has been collected from this study will help to inform gender-specific, sport-specific body image programs for coaches, parents, and athletes across Canada. There are very few body image programs that currently exist in Canada, but I believe that by providing education and creating awareness about this topic, athletes can be provided with the tools needed to develop and maintain a positive body image. These programs can also be tailored to coaches and parents to educate them on the types of behaviours to look for in an athlete who is struggling with body image concerns and how to appropriately discuss body image with athletes. By introducing these programs to sport organizations, hopefully the topic of body image will become less of a taboo subject and more of an open conversation among athletes, coaches, and parents.

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Appendix A
Participant Consent Form and Resource List

Title: The Sport Body Image Project: Exploring Body Image Concerns Among Athletes in Newfoundland and Labrador through Digital Storytelling

Researcher(s): Katherine Vanden Elzen (PI), Graduate Student, School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, MUN

Dr. Erin Cameron (Supervisor), School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, MUN

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled: **The Sport Body Image Project: Exploring Body Image Concerns Among Athletes in Newfoundland and Labrador through Digital Storytelling**

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researchers if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:

We are the research team (Katherine Vanden Elzen and Dr. Erin Cameron) from Memorial University and are being supported by a Vice-President SHHRC grant.

Purpose of study:

We would like to invite you to take part in a research project exploring body image among athletes using digital storytelling. This study is looking for current or former athletes (competitive or non-competitive) who are interested in sharing their experiences of how sports impacted their body image.

Your participation will contribute to a growing body of literature in the area of strategies in supporting positive body image in sports, as well as the use of digital story (DS) telling methods for exploring body image among athletes.

What you will do in this study:

If you consent to take part in this study, you will be invited to participate in a two-day workshop to develop and create a digital story of how sport has influenced how you feel about your body. A part of the digital storytelling creation process there is a ‘story circle’ which is similar to a focus group. The story circle will give you an opportunity to share your ideas for your story and to receive feedback. The discussions during the storytelling circle will be audio recorded. You do not have to contribute during the story circle process.

If you wish to continue to participate in the study, you will also be invited to participate in a follow up 60-minute individual interview to describe your experience in the workshop. This interview will also be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Length of time:

The 2-day workshop will take place over two weekends and will last approximately six hours per day. There will be 6-8 participants in the workshop. The interview is estimated to take 60-minutes. This interview will be scheduled at a time and place that is most convenient for you 2-3 weeks after the workshop. You will also have the time to review the transcript, which will take approximately 30-minutes.

Withdrawal from the study:

At any point in the study you may request to end your participation. This includes at any point during the two-day workshop. You also have the right to withdraw during/after the individual interview and the data collected will be destroyed (transcripts or audio recording). As part of the workshop there will be a ‘story circle’, which is similar to a focus group, where you will have the opportunity to share your story. You can choose to contribute to the ‘story circle’, however, if you do, we cannot destroy the data collected as it will be comprised of multiple participants.

After your digital story is created, you have full ownership for your digital story and we will ask permission to use it as part of the data analysis. You have full rights to decide not to include your digital story as part of the analysis.

- You have up to one month after the completion of the workshop or individual interview (insert date) if you would like to request your data be removed from the study. However, you cannot request to remove the focus group (story circle) data.

Possible benefits:

Participants may benefit from receiving training and experience in creating a digital story and your participation will contribute to a growing body of literature on strategies to supporting positive body image in sports.

Possible risks:

If you feel uncomfortable talking about your experiences as it relates to body image or the process of creating your digital story, you may leave the workshop or stop the interview, and/or withdraw from the study, without any repercussions. Should you wish to learn more about body image or wish to speak to someone further about your experiences here are some good resources and the contact information for organizations and/or clinical psychologist groups in the St. John’s area doing work in the area of body image.

Body Image Resources

- BodySense: <http://edfnl.ca/bodysense-promoting-positive-image-in-sport/>
- Body Image Toolkit: <http://edfnl.ca/body-image-toolkit/>

- Media Smarts: <http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/body-image>
- Body Image Health: <http://bodyimagehealth.org/>

Body Image Organizations

- Eating Disorder Foundation of Newfoundland: <http://edfnl.ca/>
- Eastern Health: <http://www.easternhealth.ca/Professionals.aspx?d=2&id=355&p=354>
- Body Image Network: <https://www.facebook.com/BodyImageNetworkNL/>
- Canadian Women's Health Network: <http://www.cwhn.ca/en/yourhealth/faqs/bodyimage>

Clinical Psychologists

- Eating Disorder Foundation of Newfoundland Client Consultation Program: Patricia Nash 722-0500, Toll Free 1-855-722-0500 or email patricia@edfnl.ca
- Association of Psychology of NL: <http://www.apnl.ca/find-a-psychologist/>
- Memorial University Student Wellness and Counseling Center (Dr. Olga Heath): <http://www.mun.ca/counselling/home/>

Confidentiality:

Protecting your privacy is an important part of this study. We will be collecting your name and contact information in order to coordinate the workshop and follow-up interviews but identifying information will not be used as part of the data analysis. Every effort to protect your privacy will be made, however it cannot be guaranteed because, the other people taking part in this workshop will know your name and hear your comments. All members of the focus group will be reminded

- to respect the privacy of each member of the group
- treat all information shared with the group as confidential

Anonymity:

Due to the nature of participating in a focus group for data collection, we cannot guarantee that you will be anonymous among the other people participating, where you or other participants may reveal sensitive information. You also will be creating a digital story which you will have full ownership of and it is up to your discretion if/where you

share the digital story. We will not be sharing your story but will request your permission to analyze your story for general themes; something we will request from all participant.

We will be reviewing with all participants the need to maintain confidentiality of group members including names and information, however, we cannot guarantee that participants will not share.

But rest assured that every reasonable effort will be made to ensure anonymity in all research related activities (presentations, publications, reports).

Recording of Data:

Interviews and the story circle (focus group) will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. You will be creating a video (digital story) of your experience of how sports impacted your body image and we will ask your permission to analyze your digital story for themes but we will not be sharing the video without prior consent outside of the workshop setting.

Storage of Data:

- Transcripts from the interviews will be stored as a hardcopy and on a USB stick.
- Electronic data will be stored on a pass-word protected USB.
- Information collected and used by the research team will be stored in a locked cabinet in the office of Dr. Erin Cameron, 2005 Physical Education Building, Memorial University. Katherine Vanden Elzen is the person responsible for keeping it secure.
- The researchers (Dr. Erin Cameron, and Katherine Vanden Elzen) will have access to the data collected.
- As per University policy, data will be kept for a minimum of five years.

Reporting of Results:

The research will be presented at conferences, published in academic and non-academic journals, presented as a public workshop on eating disorder prevention and positive body image promotion. Recommendations will also be made to government and sport associations on strategies to help create body positive programs for athletes. Data will be presented without any identifying information.

Sharing of Results with Participants:

We will offer a summary report to all participants. Participants will also be able to access the study results on the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation website (HKR) and the HIPP website (<http://hippcollaborative.com>)

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Katherine Vanden Elzen at 709-769-5005, or ksve46@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **after** the focus group, data collected from you up to that point will be retained by the research team.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw **after** the interviews have ended, your data can be removed from the study up to one month after the workshop (*will provide specific date*)

I agree to be audio-recorded

Yes No

I agree to the use of direct quotations

Yes No

I agree to participate in a follow-up interview:
The best way to reach me is by phone or email
at: _____

Yes No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your signature confirms:

I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Appendix B Digital Storytelling Workshop Outlines

Day 1: The Sport Body Image Project – Digital Storytelling Workshop Outline

Time	Session/Location	Reminders/Supplies
	To pick up prior to session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erin to pick up coffee, cream, sugar • Erin to bring ice, cooler • Pick up cups 	
9:00	Session 1: Welcome and Introductions (PE2028) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the facilitators and provide an overview of the goals of the workshop (5min) – Katherine, Bahar, Erin • Discuss confidentiality, creating a safe space for participants, and contract (5min) - Katherine • Discuss the consent process and the rights for participants to withdraw at any point (5min) - Katherine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart • Markers • Pens • Consent forms • Recorders • Speakers • Name tags
9:15	Session 2: What is Digital Storytelling (DS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the history of DS and the current use as a research methodology (5min) – Katherine • What is DS? Understanding Story structure • Show examples of DS and discuss participant’s perspectives of the video (10min) – Katherine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint • Selected digital stories
9:30	Sessions 3 Part 1: Story Circle Introductory Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the purpose of the story circle games (1min) – Katherine • Introduction Game: Begin with everyone telling the group their name, where they are from, and what sport they are involved with or have been involved with in the past (2min) – Katherine • Partner Discussion: Split into groups of two and each partner takes a turn telling each other three things about themselves and switching. After we return to the big group and each person tells the group what they learned about their partner (builds trust and listening skills) (5min) – Katherine • Picture Game: Have the participants take out their phones and choose a photo from their phone to tell the group a story about. Allows them to practice telling a story (10min) – Katherine • List Game: Participants get to choose to use one of the following stimuli; “I love”, “I hate”, “I used to dream about”, “I know I am having a good day when”. Take 3 min to write a list of things that relate to one of these stimuli. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper or note pads • Pens • Paper slips with situational words cut out for “Using Our Senses Game”

	<p>Share the list with the group and elaborate on one of the items. (Gives practice relaying a personal story). (15min) – Katherine</p> <p>Extras</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body Sculpting: groups of three, everyone takes turns being the sculpture and being the clay. Each of the sculptures need to form the clay into an coach-athlete relationship and what they think it looks like. Each member has one minute each. Once everyone has had their turn, bring the group back and discuss what they created. • Using Our Senses Game: Put words into a bag (studying, competition, success, loss, etc) get the participants to choose a word and get them to describe what the word feels like. For example: the chosen word is “competition” – exhilarating, stressful, disappointing, exciting, etc. Allows participants to practice putting feelings and descriptive words to a situation. (10min) – Katherine 	
10:15	<p>Session 3 Part 2: Story Circle Discussion (25-30min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the purpose of the discussion and how it will be recorded and used as data (1min) – Katherine • 1. How would you describe the relationship between sport and bodies? • 2. How does the media portray athlete bodies? Is this important? • 3. Does sport treat male and female athlete bodies differently? Why? Examples? • 4. Did sport influence your own relationship to your body? How, explain. • 5. How do you feel others viewed your body in sport? Was this important? Why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorders • Speakers
10:45	Break	
11:00	<p>Session 4: Script Writing (~25-30min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direction and guidance of how to create the script. Show the Story Map Outline to help them form their story line and put their thoughts down on paper • Ask participants to note any images, music or words they want include at each part of their story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make copies of the Story Map to provide for the participants • Sticky notes • Paper/ Notebooks • Pens • Markers
11:30	<p>Session 5: Story Circle Reassemble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group comes together to share the drafts of their scripts and ideas and feedback is given with permission (15min) • Participants revise script (15min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorders • Speakers
12:00	Lunch	
12:30	Session 6: Creating Story Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Markers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the story board and how it can help lay out their thoughts and organize their narration with their images (5min) – Katherine • Allow them time to create a story board. If they are struggling with it, provide different tools such as a mind map, index cards, dictation (15min) • Review ideas with facilitator for feedback • At the end of the session, show participants the iPads they will be using 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pens • Index Cards • Notebooks
1:00	Summary of the day and expectations for the final session	

Day 2: The Sport Body Image Project – Digital Storytelling Workshop Outline

Time	Session/Location	Supplies
9:00	Session 7: Introductions and Tutorial of WeVideo (PE3007) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an overview of the day • Walk through the editing program with the participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iPads • Mac computer/laptop • Flash drives
9:30	Session 8: Digital Story Creation/Recording Script <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will start working on their stories • One participant at a time will get a chance to record their voice over of their scripts in PE2021 • Facilitators will be there to help with the editing program, and to assist the participants in creating their DS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headphones (8) • Headphone connectors • Microphone
12:00	Lunch	
1:00	Session 9: DS Creation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants continue to work on overlaying music and visual media over the voiceover and finalize their DS. • Facilitators can help assist in this process in collaboration with participant 	
2:30	Session 10: Sharing the Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on ownership and copyright • Participants will be able to share their videos with the group if they feel comfortable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tissues
3:30	Session 11: Closing and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next steps are discussed with participants (individual interviews) 	

Appendix C

Story Circle Guide

The Story Circle is a process to help each participant not only find and clarify the story being told, but also to check in with them about how they feel about it, identify the moment of change in their story, then use that to help them think through how the audience will see and hear their story in the form of a digital story. And finally, after the Story Circle is completed, and the storyteller has had some time alone with his or her thoughts, they can then let all of these considerations inform them as they sit down to write.

Here are some prompt questions for the story circle, which is similar to a focus group:

1. How would you describe the relationship between sport and bodies?
2. How does the media portray athlete bodies? Is this important?
3. Does sport treat male and female athlete bodies differently? Why? Examples?
4. Did sport influence your own relationship to your body? How, explain.
5. How do you feel others viewed your body in sport? Was this important? Why?

Appendix D

Interview Questions for Female Participants

1. How would you describe your overall experience with the Digital Storytelling (DS) workshop? What did you like the most? What did you like the least?
2. Do you have any suggestions on what we could do to improve future DS workshops?
3. What was it like for you trying to capture your experience as a digital story?
4. What part of creating your DS did you enjoy the most? What was the most challenging?
5. How did you feel after you watched your DS story? Do you feel it captures your experience with how sport impacted your body image?
6. What was it like sharing your DS with fellow participants? Are you planning on sharing your story?
7. What was your experience of the story circle? Did you find it helpful in providing direction or clarifying your story?
8. Did you feel there were elements to your personal experience that you couldn't put as part of your DS?
9. How was your experience trying to choose music, photos, images and text? Do you feel they were able to represent your experience?
10. After going through the DS workshop and creating a DS, do you feel this is a good approach to representing body image?
11. What do you think you got most out of this experience?
12. Do you think this approach could be used to shift how sport influences young athletes' body image? Why or why not?

Appendix E

Interview Questions for Male Participants

Project Objectives:

- 1) How do athletes' story/narrate their experiences with body image?
- 2) How does gender inform the telling of an athletes' story?
- 3) What are the benefits and barriers of the DS process in exploring the athlete body story?

Athlete Bodies

1. How would you view/describe an "athlete body"?
2. How do you feel about or view your athlete body?
3. How has sport influenced your relationship to your body? How, explain.
4. How do you feel others view your body/other bodies in sport? Was this important?
Why?
5. How does body image play a role in sport?
6. What would be the best way to discuss body image with athletes?

Sport, Bodies, Society

7. How does society portray athlete bodies (i.e., media, schools, community, etc.)? Is this important?
8. Does sport treat male and female athlete bodies differently? Why? Examples?

Digital Storytelling

9. To enhance our understanding on our original data collection method, can you tell me why participating in the Digital Story workshops didn't work out for you?
10. If you were to create your own digital story about your personal experiences with sport and body, what would your story be about?

Additional Info

11. Anything else you would like to tell us?

Appendix F
Unused Quotes from Interviews and Story Circle

Theme 1: Body Image Influencers from the Sporting Environment and Society	
Adult Influences: <i>Parents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yep, like I said a whole other story with my mom, but she has influenced me wanting to be in sports and going to the gym. And I love going to the gym now, I used to go for punishment. But now I definitely go because I love it. But she has influenced me in the way that I need to exercise to lose weight, and to be thin. • And just because I wasn't at that point of being crazy thin, it didn't matter, I still had body fat to lose. I found that I wasn't like the other girls on the team. So, I found that there was always pressures from coaches and parents. • Like I know this is kind of off topic, but every year for my birthday, my best friends would give me my favorite snacks which was the double stuffed Oreos and I loved it. But because I was so ashamed of everything I ate and how I felt so much judgement from my mom, I would hide them under my bed and I would eat them at night. If my mom found them she would give them to my step-dad and tell him to eat them and say that [I] doesn't need them.
<i>Coaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also, in ballet and gymnastics, is like... sometimes coaches and trainers won't choose you because you are not like that stereotype, thin stereotype with like short (small) boobs or like really skinny, they want really skinny girls. They actually like, stop eating going to the gym...because they need to be really skinny. So, like if you are not that stereotype, they (coaches and trainers) just won't choose you...like give you the chance. • I would say I was probably 13 or 14 (years old) and my mom told my coach my weight and... umm... my coach emailed back and said, "THAT IS TOO HEAVY", in caps... I'll never forget it! And I lost 12 pounds in 2 weeks. So, I went from 150(lbs.) to 138(lbs.) in two weeks because I starved myself and I was like, 'I need to be thin!' • AND THEN BE PRAISED WHEN I LOST 12 POUNDS IN 2 WEEKS! LIKE HOW IS THAT HEALTH? HOW?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would show up to swim practice and my coach would be like, ‘oh my gosh, you are looking so slim!’ • I just find that I was never to the point where I was really skinny. Even though I wasn’t eating and working out vigorously. Even though I wasn’t super thin, I still was encouraged to keep losing weight. So even though I was doing everything; I was starving, I was going to the gym all of the time, on top of swimming in the morning before school and after school, I still had weight to lose. So, weight loss was still encouraged even though my coaches had no idea what was going on behind the scenes. It was still praised that I was losing weight and they had no idea what I was actually doing to lose the weight. • So, it’s this taboo, fragile area where you have coaches that know some things and don’t want to say anything because they think it’s better. But then you get coaches that tell all their players to lose weight, or that everyone needs to eat better but that’s no good either. • I had a swimmer in my group when I was on my club team. It was the last year and we were at training camp and one of the swimmers was hospitalized and had like an extremely low blood pressure and was like delirious and anorexic. It didn’t have to do with the coach that year but the coach the year before told him... it was actually a guy, told him that he needed to eat a sandwich and would always make sly and kind of gross remarks because he was a very small and petite guy. There were always remarks made like that, “You need to go eat. Why are you so small?” Anyways, it went the other way and he got even smaller and was hospitalized. • Right? It just sucks that people don’t get the chance to show their skill. I know girls that came to try out who were bigger when I was growing up and they would never make the team because I guess the coaches just judged them. • Yeah right? I even found that in swimming, if I wasn’t thin like everybody else, even though I could swim fast and I was strong, it didn’t matter, it was about how I looked. My sister never had the ideal body type for swimming and coaches never took her seriously and she was only there because her older sister (Caroline) is in it and her mom just put her in it, so we (the
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	<p>coaches) aren't going to take her seriously. She was never great, but she was good, and she was never taken seriously but she could have been great.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When someone doesn't see the potential in you, it's hard to see the potential in yourself. Especially from a coach standpoint, if a coach isn't putting their all into you, you're not gonna feel obligated to put your all into the sport. Which is sad because you don't know how good you could be until someone sees that in you. • It hasn't happened to me, but I've heard a bunch of stories about coaches saying, "I don't care about how you lose the weight, but you got to lose it." It's usually a lose weight thing. But for boxing and power lifting, it could be a gain-weight thing as well. • Yes. I think coaches' viewpoints are actually very important. The things that I've heard coaches say are a little extreme sometimes. Like if coaches say, "Everybody needs to lose 5lbs," well I think, "We are already working out 5 hours a day." Like literally doing cardio, I don't really think we need to lose 5lbs in addition to what we are already doing. • Coaches, it's a little more serious. You do get a lot of feedback and criticism from coaches about your body and again it's because they can see, and they can tell. They can tell if you've gone to the gym or not over the summer. they can tell if you aren't losing weight because they know how much we are working out, so they assume it's what we are eating. They can kind of tell those things so then they make assumptions or accusations that aren't necessarily positive. So sometimes that comes across as negative when really, they are trying to look out for you and help you, but you don't always see it that way. • There was one time a girl on my team, she didn't have the best cardio at all but there was one time that she got in so much trouble with coach in Halifax when we were at Atlantics because her mom brought her a treat to her hotel room. She got suspended from the game after that because her mom brought her treats to her hotel room, but we weren't allowed to eat it. So again, that is about diet but that still ties into... like I will never forget that. That was insane. She literally got in so much trouble for that. We had a
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	<p>team meeting about it and everything. We were literally under the age of 14.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="505 317 1435 604">• The coaches wouldn't care about what the players look like in terms... In terms of their body they would care if they were fit enough to play the sport. If they were a little bit overweight, they might want them to lose some weight. If they were underweight, they may want them to gain some weight. But it's not about the way that they look. It's just to improve their performance. It's not about aesthetics.<li data-bbox="505 615 1435 945">• My coaches never saw it as a harmful thing that I was losing weight but then when they all realized that I needed help to gain weight, they encouraged me. So, that was a good thing to have that support system because I can't imagine it being the opposite way. Like I have never been told to or have had to manage my weight in a bad way. So, I am happy that I had that (positive influence from coaches) in a good way, like when I needed it the most.
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<p>Peer Influences: <i>Teammates</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeah so when I was playing hockey, I had a very poor body image because I was the fat guy on the team and it obvious and everyone made fun of me for that. Then when I went to football, I wasn't. I was right somewhere in the middle. Then I started getting bigger and stronger, and it was great. I got to university and everybody is bigger and stronger than they were in high school. • But even being on deck in your swim suits, there is a lot of comparison (between teammates). I always compared myself to other people. And no, I never felt that teammates intentionally ever made you feel you had to lose weight or made you feel negatively, but like just looking at people who were thinner and didn't have their body fat poking out or anything like that, I always felt that I had to be more like them. And if they were faster than me, that just made me want to lose weight more. • Sometimes it's not even intentional though. Like if you are in that (desired) stereotype and someone else isn't, like your teammates could be a constant reminder that you don't look that way. When I was in figure skating, I can remember one of my teammates telling me that she wore a waist trainer for competitions because she would say, "I'm fatter than you. I don't look as nice in my skating dress as you do. So, I am wearing this stuff to keep my stomach in." And then I'm like, "Sorry that I am a constant reminder to you that I am smaller than you. I'm not trying to make you feel bad." So obviously I could be a reminder to someone who is not in that stereotypically body type, that they don't have the "ideal" body type for figure skating. It's really sad. • I know in other places, athletes tend to feel judged about their bodies especially in a weight room or a practice environment where you are wearing tighter clothing. If anything, it encourages you to not be out of shape, I guess.
<p><i>Competitors</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that has had the biggest impact on my own personal body image. Thinking that I want arms like that or abs like that, or legs like that. You kind of want bits and pieces of other people's bodies because you see it so often when it's something that admirable in the sport. • Yeah. Like when you go to competition there's spectators and there's officials and there's other swimmers and there's coaches

	<p>and there are coaches from other teams. The sporting environment is very obtrusive to your body because everybody can see. So, I think people definitely do care about that and a lot of people are self-conscious and aware of their body. –</p>
<p>Sport Uniform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well I know for me, personally I was in competitive swimming, so you had to wear tight competition suits, you know and any bit of body fat that you have is going to be poking out... but like with sports, there is always that pressure to look good in a swim suit and I need to be able to be fast... • Like if I were to play a sport like basketball or soccer where you weren't always exposed. Nobody is going to know if you have a six pack or not. Nobody is going to know how big your shoulders are, or nobody is going to know if your pecks are defined but like that's something that you can see in swimming and that's something that people notice, talk about, and point out. It's like a topic of discussion and its very evident for coaches to say like, "Look at that person, they are so fit," or, "Look at that person, they are so strong." And like you can see that and its very evident. But like in a sport where you were clothed more or even a winter sport where you are completely covered, like who knows what their bodies really look like. But I feel like swimming is a very skin and bones sort of sport. • I've had some people poke this (stomach) sometimes and be like, "Oh yeah I should fix my eating a bit more." Especially because you are wearing skin tight stuff. Sometimes I wish I could just do a sport in sweat pants. • The skin-tight suits were really hilarious. But I never ever felt super comfortable in the skin-tight suits because while everyone around me was fairly physically tiny, I was a bigger kid growing. So, I always had the rolls popping out in the suits. • Like with basketball players for example, especially female athletes, you're sitting there in your jerseys and yeah people are looking and being like, "Oh yeah, she's overweight."
<p>Influences from the Self</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like even on Instagram people that just go to the gym and workout, you know they have abs and a big butt and popping delts. I think that leads to a lot of eating disorders and body dysmorphia. Because I know it has for me and that's why I had to

	<p>delete it. I've always had a lot of body issues, so I want to learn to love myself before.... I don't know I just find that society has made me really messed up about myself. So, I know that's just my personal experience. I hate looking in the mirror.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I follow WAY too many fitness people and I shouldn't be looking at it because I look at myself and I am like, "Well I can lift the same weight as them, why don't do I look like that yet?" • And even if you do kind of take a step back from social media, its always still gonna be there. Just because you are not seeing it, doesn't mean it's not there. Which is really sad. There will always be those negative concepts around you. • Depends on the sport again. It seems to me that popular culture would. Like female will still look slender. If were a dude and you lifted weights, that would be describe a healthy male. If you go to any gym around the world, its men in the weight room doing bicep curls and women on the treadmill doing cardio and trying to lose 10lbs. So, in popular culture, those would be the two sport specific things. So slender; "We don't care how you do it. You could run, or you could just not eat. We don't care. Just as long as you are slim." And for the men it's like, "Just don't look too big and broad. Don't look like your trying to be big but look like that." That's what pop media kind of does. • I think that main media is that the male body has to have low body fat and some musculature whereas the female one doesn't. So, when we were kids, I thought to be a dude you have to do weights and stuff, and all girls have to do is not eat. You know? • I would say a lot of young people who want to get into sport might be inundated with the modeling world version of what they are supposed to look like versus what they need to be doing in order to do well in their chosen sport. • And even if you don't fit those body type, if you are playing professionally, you see these pieces where people will analyze and say, "Okay, they [the athlete] aren't in this body type, so how are they good, with this [sport]?" ... Like Usain Bolt... if you look at him you don't think he would be like good at running, like for short distances... really fast, and they analyze what he's like and how he uses his body, and why does the shape of his body or how he's built have to affect how good he is, like they just associate
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	<p>that like, okay like, “You don’t look like the rest of the runners, so what’s different about you?” I remember watching that and I was just like, “Why does it have to come down to this?” You know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I struggled with my weight in high school and lost a lot of weight and was borderline anorexic. No one saw it as a problem. I didn’t start losing weight because of pressures, it was a medical thing and it just led into the pressures because I couldn’t get the weight back. But literally no one ever said anything to me about me losing the ample amount of weight until it was borderline “I am going to die”. None of my coaches, none of my teachers, like no one saw it as an issue. It was like, “Oh, [Nicole] is losing a bunch of weight, its fine.” • ...they assumed that I took care of myself and people wished they could be like and have my abs or my shoulders, or whatever they wanted. But in the back of my head I’m thinking, “There’s no fucking way.” It was so hard. For me it came at such a cost, right. It was hard to hear people make comments that they wanted things that they saw in me, but it was just superficial weird stuff. In my head, I knew it was just a bunch of bullshit, they don’t actually want this empty shell of body because that’s what it felt like for me. • I guess the ideal body type would be something like slender and has a lot of lean muscle mass. That is something that not only me as an athlete but us as a society has ingrained into what the ‘standard’ is of what people think is the ideal body type for an athlete. • Society and media, they are pivotal in making the athlete body look the way people think it’s supposed to look because they usually portray athlete bodies as tall. For people who are short like me, it’s not something we see in ourselves, so it can cause problems in people who are wary of being short and who are insecure about that.
Theme 2: Body Image Ideals Expressed Through Sport Success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So usually they will be muscular and lower levels of body fat than your average person. They are probably going to be longer and leaner, right. So that is probably how I would describe it. And obviously they are going to be able to function better than the average person. 	

- So, I was extremely confident for the first time in my life and I had really really high self-esteem, but then when I came to university... I chose MUN over two universities, I got cut because it was a really competitive year for volleyball. So that was the end of that. And I rapidly declined in self-esteem, I rapidly declined in confidence. I got really really sad and felt like shit and felt really bad about myself. I hated how I looked, I hated everything. I refused to take any pictures of me standing up in groups. I would refuse to look at any pictures of me standing up because I just hated it.
- So, your body does morph into that. But in the process of your body morphing into that, for me it did get caught up in the culture of it such that it... if you identify with something strong enough it helps you feel a part of that and go further with that.
- The first time I shaved my legs for cycling and put on a pair of cycling shorts and went down to the club and everyone else was like that, I just felt a part of it and that I could keep up with everyone. I couldn't more or less than the day before but psychologically I was a part of this thing now
- I know people who view track as filled with athletes who have ideal body types but there are a lot of bodies especially in throwing and shot put that would be considered heavy weight, lifter bodies almost, because they have to be built up and as a result their bodies don't necessarily look like a stereotypical fit person, but they are just as much athletes and just as much healthy as everybody else. It's just their version of healthy is built upon building mass, and as a result it can cause them to have a gut and that sort of stuff
- Depending on the sport that they play, but if it's a female athlete for example, and they do wrestling or shot put or rugby, sports where they can be a little bit heavier, they still look like athletes they are just bigger athletes. Then American football, you look at offensive and defensive lineman, yeah some of them are over-fat but they look like athletes. So even if there is a little bit of... you know what I mean?
- Depending on the sport because there are different sports that require different functions in a body. Also, in those different sports, certain heights and certain body types serve different functions. So, from a cycling perspective you got taller and broader people that break the winds to lead folks out and the shorter and leaner people will go up the hills. They go a lot faster and climb a lot faster. You know you build up your teams according to those functions all to get that one person to the end line a lot faster than the other teams. So, you build your teams according to that. So, if you think about basketball players, they are super tall but not necessarily. There are a lot of skilled basketball players who are probably shorter than me. I don't think there's a defined athlete body type. It all depends on what the person wants to do and if they want to work hard to do it.

- Obviously in swimming if you want to be a sprinter, you will want bigger muscles... And like distance swimmers are usually tiny and lean. People who want to do distance, strive to be thinner and leaner and not bulk up. So, there's even very polar opposite body images within swimming itself from kind of what events you do, and people strive to be that when really their body isn't allowing them to be that. It's not natural, it's not healthy anymore, it's for sport
- ...swimmers are the "upside down triangular" with big shoulders and thin bodies but not everyone fits that stereotype. I've known a lot of great athletes that are four foot nothing, skinny and awesome swimmer who wins everything. I've also known six-foot bulky guys that can hull themselves through the water like nothing else. It just really depends...
- ...you know if you look at Olympians and elite athletes and what it takes to be where they are. The belief in the process of commitment, but you have to go whole hearted into that. You're not gonna get really far if you are half-ass it and you don't believe in yourself. I can't just sit there and write, "Dear Diary, I want to be an Olympian." But you do have to believe in yourself enough to commit to each moment to get through the blocks of work that it requires. In so doing that, the body with morph itself into whatever its advantages it biologically to get through that thing.
- We try to celebrate the athletic body... this is my body, look at what it can do. But I think part of the bigger conversation is to be honest and say, "Yeah it can do that because it has been manipulated and designed to do that." The subculture now is that people like their "squat butt". And their legs so they, basketball and volleyball players, can jump really high. And yeah, they should celebrate that but also don't deny that it does that and look that way. So, your body adapts itself to what it has to do... So, they end up looking the way that they do because it's a by-product of their training
- I've stopped cycling to get thin and I've started cycling for the fun of it and then the getting thin and feeling good is a by-product of that.
- So, like, his [Lebron James] body type and what he does to train, is going to be tailored to what he has to do. Like you talk about sport-specific movements, for working out and stuff like that, you aren't going to be working out your arms if you are... running. You know what I mean? You're gonna be like focusing on the areas that are gonna help you... be better at your sport.
- Well I think there is a strong relationship between them/ like I think that with every sport there is a certain body type or body image that like... just... everybody has and if you don't fit that body image it's kinda like, you feel bad about yourself or other people will view you as different like "she's really a soccer player? she's too

tall and skinny” ... kind of thing. Or like, I guess gymnastics is like ... I guess people who do gymnastics would be like short and like, like, you know, kind of muscular... and people who are taller. Like if me and [Elizabeth] would be like “yeah, we are really good gymnasts”, you know what I mean? ... but I definitely think there is a strong relationship between the two and each sport has a specific body type that is expected to come from that person playing the sport, especially when you get into higher, umm levels of competitiveness and such

- Yeah. And I feel like there are different, like umm... like Usain Bolt is definitely like not an exception to that, but I do think that some body types are like, just better for certain sports just... even though Usain Bolt, like you said, is tall and you would never think he would be good at sprinting but he’s an exception, I find...like he is unreal at sprinting, obviously. So... but... I don’t know, like to a certain extent, definitely the body would help, the body type would help in a particular sport. But it doesn’t mean that you can’t play that sport and you can’t excel at that sport, you know what I mean?
- So, like... my coach would like to take me aside like by myself and be like, “you have to practice, like jumping to a certain height because you are short.” You know, while all the other middles didn’t have to do that. Right? Because, not that was a bad thing, I didn’t feel bad for it, it’s just like, “Well if I want to keep my spot, if I want to be as good as I can, I’m going to have to put extra effort in because I don’t fit into that body type”, you know?
- Like at work, when people ask me if I am an athlete, I’m like, “Yeah”, and they are like, “volleyball or basketball?” and I’m like, “Neither, ...”
- Like if you are playing a sport, and like you see a... it doesn’t even have to do with media, like if you are watching like the Olympics, they aren’t going to be talking about the body weight, but they will be showing like, okay, like here’s a volleyball team, this is what they look like. Herse a track team, this is what they look like. Not even trying, but they are putting in these, like messages out like “okay, like these are the best athletes in the world, this is what they look like. If you don’t look like this, it could be hard to be considered the best”, you know? Like that is like the gymnastics thing, you don’t see very many tall gymnasts, because they need to be small, petite to do these things. Right? So, someone who is tall, or might be like “K, this is not the sport for me,” and might feel really shitty about themselves cause they are not fitting into that.
- It really comes down to efficiency and like what is the best for performance, cause like if you have someone, like LeBron James, who is undoubtedly one of the best basketball players there is, but if you have him run a marathon, he probably won’t be able to do it because like, his sport is targeted against short bouts of going hard,

right? He's not going to be able to take that and run hours for a marathon, you know what I mean?

- I think this [sport specific bodies] can have two types of impacts. It can push you to be better at the sport but in another sense, it could put a block in your mind thinking, "well because of this, I won't be able to do that."
- So, when I played rugby, it was really bad because, like I said I was always really really thin, like rake thin when I was younger, I feel like I got judged for not being stinky or short. But I could run really fast, so there were aspects of the sport that I was good at because of my body type but the typical rugby player wouldn't look like me. For soccer I found it was the same way. Lots of good soccer players have big quads and were shorter than me and I always felt that people thought they could just push me down, when really, I would push them back if they tried to push me down. I definitely found that since I was so tall and also thin that people didn't think that I was as powerful when I actually was.
- I got approached by the athletic director at MUN. And I ended up being recruited for track because of my height and my body composition. They figured I could get really fast really quickly and I could probably throw far, so here we are.
- I know for me it depends on what sport. Every sport has its own aesthetic and that's the issue. When the androgynous complex came out, it was broad shoulder men. So, when I was cycling, its big legs and little T-Rex arms. You knew that you were ready to race, especially doing a lot of hills and stage races if you already size small bike jersey doesn't fit on your arms. So that aesthetic was Tour-de-France looking people.
- Then if you look at marathon runners, it's just all over skinny. Marathon runners look different than cyclists, who look different than a power lifter.
- It would definitely be "unfat". Again, a marathon runner looks different than a powerlifter, but they are both "unfat" I guess.
- I would describe myself at that point in my life at age 17 and I was husky, I'll say. Probably about 210-215lbs on average but I'm 6'1" or 6'2" if I stand up straight. You know it's not necessarily overweight, but you know I've always felt large a lot of the time. Very different from cyclist and triathletes which I was mostly around throughout that time, but I don't think it ever affected me so much at that point.
- One thing that made me really interested in this in relation to that experience, you look at cyclist in the tour de France and some very lean cyclist. They have massive legs and really skinny arms. Basically, a pyramid.
- The ideal body type varies between sports and again like we said earlier, it doesn't necessarily hold true. Some people are going to do better just because they work harder. Some people have very ideal frames for a particular sport and, so they are

going to do well there. The ideal body that's being shoved at us from everywhere is not going to be functional for everything. Cyclist don't need super huge arms in order to perform. That slows them down actually. They've got to get lean.

- Lance Armstrong needed to get cancer to become fast enough... It's a funny thing. When he first went to the guy that got him all doped up, he was completely clean, perfectly healthy and the guy wouldn't look at him because he didn't have a cyclist body since he had a little bit of upper body strength with big muscles. He was a triathlete for several years before that, so the guy brushed him away. He got cancer and went back to the guy afterwards, and the guy said he was good now. Yeah because he was completely malnourished and that was the ideal place he needed to get to apparently in order to perform.
- I guess its sport specific, so ... in terms of general athletic I would define it as fit and healthy. Whatever that looks like would be sport specific because I know for swimming an athletic body or fit body is lean muscle, there are certain shapes associated with swimmer's bodies and you are very cardiovascular fit and I think that's kind of unique to swimming but not all sports.
- It would depend on the sport based on the way they would appear, but they would still be, in terms of their abilities athletically, they would be able to move better than the average person, or at least they should. Depending on the sport it would change, like the level of body fat they have.'
- But like basketball, soccer, volleyball, all of those sports the athletes need to be relatively lean because fat doesn't fly. So, if you have excess body fat it's going to slow you down in most sports.
- I think they do actually leave the sport because they don't feel like their bodies are responding the way they wanted to, or they feel really self-conscious around other people who are doing sports, and they feel like they have to compete with these other bodies that are looking more like the stereotypical ideal body
- But I think playing football has encouraged me to want to be bigger than most people and be stronger than most people. I think that is heavily influenced my body image. So, if I am with somebody and they are bigger and stronger than me, then I don't feel as good about myself as I would if I was surrounded by other people.
- Then when I got hurt I could still workout, so I was strong, but I just got fat. And then I was like, "Okay, I'm fat again. I got to do something about it." And then being fit became my thing and I was the fittest, or one of the strongest on the team and that kind of became my identity and it still is now. So that sticks with me
- In grade 12, volleyball brought me confidence I never had and self-esteem I never had and that confidence and self-esteem kind of grew my increasing success in volleyball. And when I got scouted in the fall of grade 12, it made me feel that my

height had actual meaning for something. It's not just going to bring me down, it will actually bring me up. So, I was extremely confident for the first time in my life and I had really really high self-esteem...

- So, when I went into grade 11 I started playing football, and I was like, "Oh wow. There are a bunch of guys that are way bigger than me," so I felt better right away. Which is a nice thing about football is that there are opportunities for all body types, same with rugby.
- Like with basketball players for example, especially female athletes, you're sitting there in your jerseys and yeah people are looking and being like, "Oh yeah, she's overweight," that type of thing. Even if you are the best player on the team, some people are gonna view you that way, so I think that can be challenging for some athletes that struggle with those things. But if they can perform well, then I think that makes them feel a little bit better."
- I find male swimmers very self-absorbed and they are very proud of their ... well not everyone I should say, but a lot of people are very proud of their bodies anyways, like as they are right now
- I have found a new love for sport and me probably wouldn't have tried in the past. And my teammates and the sport itself, I love it. I am really optimistic and excited for what my future in this sport will be for the rest of my eligibility. And how I will start to improve on loving my height and loving the way I look and all that stuff.
- So, I have always been used to being around big, strong people and I still felt very comfortable and confident about my body image when I was around those guys.

Theme 3: Sport as Vehicle for the Healthy Body

- It's just their version of healthy is built upon building mass, and as a result it can cause them to have a gut and that sort of stuff. There's nothing wrong with that but people in society tend to look at that as almost out of place because they look like someone who doesn't work out but these people workout every day, just like any other track and field athlete. I feel like in a lot of different sports, people do tend to look at... even people who don't fit exactly what the ideal body type is, they look at them like they're not supposed to be there
 - I think body image plays a bigger role than we think because a lot of people join sports to get fit. Not so much at the higher levels, but definitely at the grass roots level. There are people who get in and get up to the high-performance level, but they are all at some level wanting to use sports as a way to get fit
 - ...if eating an apple, a day is healthy, is eating two apples healthier? Same thing with running. People say how running is healthy but then maybe doing a marathon is probably not healthy. So, if I run an hour a day, is that healthy? If I run two hours a day, is that healthy? There is always a massive spectrum of where healthy is. So, we suck at having those long conversations and its weird to get our heads around that concept. Like 8 hours of sleep is deadly, what about 24 hours?
-
- Yeah, I think it's a bit of both. I think it's on each person for them to decide what healthy is. That's a big part of it. So, it's healthy for someone who prescribes to be triathlete, that is healthy for them. But it's not if they have an eating disorder, no more if you don't do anything and have an eating disorder. That's part of it is that what healthy is, is on the individual.
 - You know it starts at a pretty early age that we start defining what healthy is in schools right? "Don't be skinny but don't be fat! Be perfectly imperfect in the middle!"
 - I would define being fit as lean or muscular but there are people who are lean and muscular and are very unhealthy with their eating habits or their actual exercise regimes or practices and the two don't really exist in harmony all of the time.
 - I know my body really well because of all the sport and activity I've done so I try to be body positive or just think about being healthy and fit for me personally because I'm not going to be a swimmer forever...Like I'm not going to be in competitive varsity swimming forever and you know being healthy for years is better than compromising your health for two or three months at competition.
 - They assumed that I took care of myself and people wished they could be like and have my abs or my shoulders, or whatever they wanted. But in the back of my head I'm thinking, "There's no fucking way." It was so hard. For me it came at such a cost, right. It was hard to hear people make comments that they wanted things that they saw in me, but it was just superficial weird stuff. In my head, I knew it was

just a bunch of bullshit, they don't want this empty shell of body because that's what it felt like for me.

- And if you look at the dangers of eating disorders, people say that some aren't sick enough to get help. and that happens a lot. Especially for an eating disorder in the medical community, in an athletes' body, it hides itself really well
- I used to know a marathon runner and triathlete, and he was into paleo. There were some bits of stuff that makes sense but when you go too far into that, it becomes its own thing in of itself. So that's the problem with what is perceived as healthy and the definition of what healthy is
- So, staying lean wasn't always a problem but I wanted to have a balance of the both and just being in so many sports at such a young age and then carrying them as hobbies throughout my life, I've stayed healthy and fit and I think I've learned a lot about my body because of that and what I can do, my limitations, how I feel doing different things
- I think that sport for me is really going to be one of those things that keeps me healthy and keeps me in the mind set of being healthy first and not really worrying about my body anyways.
- So, putting my morning rides into my routine I would say has improved my mental health quite a bit but of course you have to balance that with social life so not getting too hard core about it. So, letting a day or two slip by without biking and knowing that that is okay
- Yeah. I know for a long time I would get questions when I had different eating disorders, and it would be about weight. And I would always say, "I'm not concerned about my weight..." It was really hard to get through to people about that. I mean for some women it might be, but it's not necessarily a weight thing. It sometimes is but its more about a look rather than a weight. So, for a long time, if people asked me if I was happy with my weight, I always said I was. If someone asked me if I wanted to talk to them about my weight, I would say no and when asked if I had an eating disorder I would say no. I didn't know I had one for a long time because it wasn't about the weight for me.
- In some prevention programs, it's almost like the way smoking was done a long time ago. We'll shame you into telling you how bad it is. The eating disorder center used to do this a long time ago, they would use a skinny black woman and the label would say, "Ethiopian or runway model?" And for me, someone with an eating disorder that just felt like they were saying, 'If you have an eating disorder you gonna look like this.
- Some people when they are healthy they tend to not be as skinny as somebody else or they tend to be skinnier than the ideal body. So, it's not only people who are

bigger than the ideal body type but there are also people who are skinner than the ideal body type as well. There are people all over the spectrum.

- I feel like that's [guilt] what has always been conditioned into me as you work out to look good and not for any healthy aspects. So that also gave me a lot of anxiety.
- Everyone can be healthy but not everyone can be "fit" looking when they are healthy

Theme 4: Reimagining the Sport Body

Awareness

- The best way to address body image in sport... I think this day and age, if you are looking at a broad scale would be to have some sort of social media movement. I think that what would be best because right now obviously its most prevalent in young females who are entered into sport and are unaware of how it's going to affect them in the future. But those are also all of the people who are addicted to social media
- When I read research, my problem with a lot of research I don't recognize myself in it because it's been too anonymized and too washed of any individual person's story... I get it as a researcher we have to be careful but as someone with an eating disorder that reads this stuff sometimes, it has been cleaned so much that there is no recognized personality in it and I don't identify with it and its useless. So, there's a balance in that.
- So, having some sort of early awareness intervention would be the best and not making it a taboo subject anymore
- But I never ever thought that height could affect someone's body image in a negative way. I always just thought that body image was the weight you have on or the weight you don't have on, or the muscle you have or the muscle you don't have. So, I thought that (what Elizabeth said) was a really cool way of thinking of body image because I would have never thought of it in that way. That is definitely not the first thing that comes to my mind
- I think that we should spend more time talking about how body image affects athletes and people in general. Body image isn't just about being fat and I think that is a huge take home message for any conversation on body image because its hard as a smaller girl to talk about how I don't know what it feels like because I am so small. So, I think there should be more conversations about how it goes both ways because I think that it's really alarming that I was that sick and no one ... not that they didn't care but no one was as concerned as if I was gaining a bunch of weight.

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Appendix G

Digital Story Transcripts

Caroline's Story: "Too Heavy"

"I began competitive swimming at the age of eight. I loved the competition and interaction with teammates. I constantly pushed myself and wanted to be the best I could be. One day my mom told my coach my weight and they said I was "too heavy". I felt embarrassed and ashamed of myself. The amount of anxiety those two words created for me took a major toll on my mental and physical health. I lost 12 pounds in 2 weeks. I hardly ate, and I worked out all of the time, sometimes more than four hours per day. I felt a lot of pressure from my coach and my mom to look a certain way. I felt so terrible about my body that I would eat in private and binge eat when I was alone. I am still affected by this statement every day. It affects how I eat and how I feel.

Almost 10 years later and I still struggle but I am learning to love and appreciate my body for what it can do. I have taken this negative experience and used it to grow and change the way I think about my body. I have learned so much reflecting back on this past experience.

I want to educate people on body image and how things said can really influence how one views their body. I think an athlete should be judged based on talent rather than their appearance. Overall, the most important thing should be a person's health and happiness, which is not a number found on a scale."

Nicole's Story: "I'll Make it to the Moon"

"My parents introduced me to sports at a very young age. One of my first memories is probably throwing a softball in the yard with my Dad. I was enrolled in the local figure skating club at the age of five and absolutely fell in love with it. I enjoyed everything about it; making friends, my coaches, the dresses and the competition – especially the competition. My parents were always supportive of me playing sports. I never felt pressure to have to achieve a certain standard for them. As long as I was happy, they were happy.

That love for sport and competition carried on into high school where I joined a number of different teams; softball, volleyball, ball hockey, table tennis, badminton, anything the school had to offer I played it and I enjoyed every minute of it.

At the age of 16, when I was in grade 10, I developed a number of infections – an untreated urinary tract infection had spread to a number of my surrounding organs. My doctor prescribed me a medication which caused my appetite to decline to the point it basically wasn't existent anymore. Even after the medication seized, my appetite didn't return. Some days I would barely eat anything at all. I began to lose weight uncontrollably, going from around 115 lbs to roughly 80 lbs in the matter of a couple of months. I went to see a few male doctors, but none of them could get past the point of me being a teenage girl succumbing to the pressures of society, and everyone of them labelled me as anorexic. No one would believe that my struggle to gain weight was real. I felt helpless and alone. Shortly after, I became depressed and suicidal. My clothes didn't fit me anymore. My jerseys bagged off my body. I couldn't perform in any of the sports

like I used to. I had to stop competing in figure skating competitions. So many things that I enjoyed, were taken away from me because I didn't have the energy to do it.

My love for the competition didn't go away through the rough days. As my performance continued to decline, it pushed me to want to get better for myself, my parents, and for the sports that I loved. With the help from my parents and my family doctor, Nancy, I sought the proper help – someone that would take me seriously. I also attended therapy to help with my depression, and I also monitored my food intake daily and slowly began to return to my normal weight.

As my weight increased, so did my enjoyment of sports and my life. I no longer had this battle between my mind and my body, where my mind wanted to get better but my body wouldn't let me. I was finally back to myself. I'll never be able to thank my parents enough for what they've done for me. They were there through everything; every up and every down. And I'll always have such a positive relationship with sports because of my experience. If I can get through this, I can get through anything, and I'll make it to the moon if I have to crawl.”

Zela's Story: Untitled

“I've always played competitive sports growing up and I've always had a passion for competing with myself and pushing my personal limits in every way. I was introduced to soccer at the age of five and up until 17, it was my life. It became a part of my identity and gave me drive.

My passion for me pushing my limits, has resulted in me experiencing athletic burnout when I was 17 years old. My anxiety consumed me, and it was at an all time

high. I stopped playing all together, started taking medication and working out all of the time to deal with my anxiety. I started noticing a small addiction to the gym and only eating healthy food developing around the age 19. I think I was just looking for something to satisfy my need for competition. I started pushing myself at the gym everyday – at times to unhealthy levels.

I am now obsessed with my body image and I am thinking about competing in bikini competitions. But is this detrimental for my health and wellness? I see from social media and people around me, that there is an ideal body type for this sport. I fear that I do not match this body type. Lately I have been so consumed with how I look and what I fuel my body with, that I feel an overwhelming amount of guilt when I indulge in something other than spinach and chicken. I make myself get sick because I do not want to compromise my body progress. If I do eat too much, I feel the need to push myself even harder the next day.

If I want to continue going to the gym and working on my body, I must stop comparing myself to the bodies around me. They are not my body. I need to begin to love my body for myself and stop trying to make myself feel like these fitness models, that probably have not eaten in two days. Is there a healthy way for me to feed my competitive side using this sport without harming and depriving my mind and body? This I do not know.”