Week 7 article

The study I choose to work on was conduct with the aim to help soccer clubs and federations to identify, select and develop youth soccer players. This seems to be a major challenge to find talented youth and develop them into future successful professional athletes. Developmental process from youth to elite is a complicated process and remains highly challenging, especially when it is about committing to a prognostic. The idea was to refine existing models and publications and work on specifics of a talent predictor that encompasses a multidimensional spectrum: physical, physiological, psychological and sociological predictors. The study focused on the psychological talent predictors and what methodological approaches were used, as well as the relevant use and description of those methods. This would help in validating methods and importance of that factor, while assessing the qualitative value of the psychological predictors.

The method used for the study was in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), with the limitation of original guidelines being made for clinical studies. Out of a total of 7800 studies, 1st and 2nd screening lead to 110 studies potentially relevant; this number went down to 25 eventually for the systematic review process of the study. The focus as well was made on three different psychological factors: psychomotor (dribbling, passing shooting, juggling), perceptual-cognitive (positioning and deciding, knowing about ball actions, knowing about others), personality-related (hope for success, failure, reaction to coach judgment, focus, etc), and all the data were possibly assessed within the genders, age categories / development and the locations, to take into account the cultural background. To mention that all the 25 studies included different psychological and performance tests conducted by the authors of those referenced studies.

As a result, the researchers found that the importance and interest on having a precise predictive model within soccer depended a lot of the cultural background – eg little interest in the USA, more in France – and that the relevance of the psychological predictors could be established, but as a part of the larger multidimensional model, not as a main and unique contributor. Individual factors were the most evident influencers (dribbling, decision-making, achievement motive), but more research was needed to really understand their level of leverage in the prognostic model. This lead to the final conclusion that “Large-scale studies that employ multidisciplinary test batteries to assess youth athletes at different age groups are required to improve the specificity of predictions” (Murr, Feichtinger,Larkin, O’Connor & Höner, 2018), that refining the approach by playing position could improve the relevance of the prognostic model, as well as considering environmental influencing factors (practice habits, game play) as other elements to be taken into account.

This research heavily relies on published studies that most of them include different type of tests and evaluation made by other colleagues and scholars. We could argue that we have no real knowledge of how the tests were conducted, if all users and takers were properly trained and informed, the context of the tests and how the consent was explained in situations that involved youth and third parties (Welfel, 2016). The conclusions take us on the ethical prudence (or wisdom) that any of the evaluated predictors is part of a wider process and doesn’t deliver or claims achieving a definite and unique result or truth, and that more elements have to be assessed to having a clearer picture. It insists as well on having to understand the cultural backgrounds, the gender and ages specific to be sure to not include any bias. Finally, this study, if not being really about establishing a diagnose, bears the idea of it as establishing a prognostic of success over the long run with a focus on the relevance of the psychomotor, perceptual-cognitive and personality-related factors, functions similarly. It could therefore be another type of limiting assessment and could be detrimental and source of distress and dehumanization if not managed with expertise, care, diligence and honesty. **References**

Welfel, E. (2016). *Ethics in counseling and psychotherapy: Standards, research, and emerging issues.* (6th Ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.

Murr, D., Feichtinger, P., Larkin. P., O’Connor, D. & Höner, O. (2018, October 15th), *Psychological talent predictors in youth soccer : A systematic review of the prognostic relevance of psychomotor, perceptual-cognitive and personality-related factors.* PloS ONE, Public Library of Science, Angel Blanch, Univeristy of Lleida, Spain