

**Introduction to Research Interests**

My research agenda has focused on two main areas: Health-Related Quality of Life and Chronic Ankle Instability. Regarding health-related quality of life the focus of my research has been on former Division I athletes, the outcomes of participation/injury in sport participation, and current physical fitness levels of former Division I athletes. I also am interested in research on Chronic Ankle Instability; specifically the identification, prevention, and long-term outcomes of Chronic Ankle Instability. I am studying these issues because I want to conduct research that will impact athletic healthcare, and to serve the community.

**Health-Related Quality of Life Research**

My interest in quality of life started with my findings in a previous research study that was published in the American Journal of Sports Medicine “Current Health-Related Quality of Life Is Lower in Former Division I Collegiate Athletes than in Non-Collegiate Athletes”. The most significant finding from this paper is that former Division I athletes may sacrifice their future health-related quality of life for their athletic career in college. Also, when comparing former Division I athletes, non-athletes who were physically active college, and the general US population, it appears that, in rank order of the 3 groups, non-athletes who were recreationally active in college had better HRQoL, followed by the general US population and then the former Division I athletes. This may be because former Division I athletes sustain more injuries and possibly more severe injuries due to the rigor of their sport. It is not surprising that the former Division I athletes scored worse on the physical function and pain interference scales. Research has shown that former athletes sustain more severe injuries and long-term effects because of those injuries. However, it was surprising that the former athletes scored worse on the depression, fatigue, and sleep scales. Many former Division I athletes are told when to work out and have access to strength and conditioning coaches, and nutritionists. However, when they leave the university all of that goes away and they may not have the education to live a healthy lifestyle as one of the general population or may be unable to participate in an activity they want to because of a previous injury. With this they need to understand that there are other lifelong sports to partake in after their athletic career. This led me to my dissertation topic which investigates differences among sports; specifically, evaluating differences among collision, contact, and limited contact sports. It is important to realize that not all sports are created equal a football player is very different than a swimmer. We need to understand those differences regarding quality of life and physical fitness and the relationship between the two.

**Chronic Ankle Instability Research**

Ankle sprains are a common occurrence in the athletic population. This has sparked many researchers to be interested in this area. Several of my first investigations regarding Chronic Ankle Instability have focused on the identification of this pathology. This led to four published

papers and the development of a new instrument to identify Chronic Ankle Instability. This new instrument has been supported by the International Ankle Consortium to be used in research classifying participants as having Chronic Ankle Instability. My recent interests regarding Chronic Ankle Instability focus on the outcomes of an ankle sprain and long term outcomes of repeated episodes of the ankle giving way. Specifically, why does one ankle sprain lead to residual problems while another ankle sprain may never cause the individual problems?

### **Research Goals**

My long-term research goals, beyond continuing to work on the aforementioned health-related quality of life issues seen in former Division I athletes, are to employ these methods in Division II and Division III athletes. In addition, to explore health-related quality of life in recent Division I student-athlete graduates and follow them for 5, 10, or even 15 years to understand the progression of quality of life, and possibly intervene to see if we can improve an individual's quality of life. Quality of life research can also be extended to how injury effects an individual's quality of life and track these changes through the injury process. Additional goals of mine include Chronic Ankle Instability and long-term outcomes of repetitive ankle sprains. Specifically, in populations that have a lack of research such as dance populations, or Army ROTC.

### **Why am I Interested in Academia?**

I enjoy the "light bulb" moment when I come up with an idea or theoretical framework that can influence research and athletic healthcare in a positive way. I enjoy the moment when the sharing of ideas and knowledge with other researchers and scientists is encouraged and challenged. I even enjoy the moment when I realize that all my unsolved questions still remain unsolved, but I hope one day they may be answered. All of these moments build up my research interests, philosophy, and plan to discover and contribute to science. Thus, I am looking forward with great anticipation to the pursuit of a career in academia both in the context of research and teaching.