

## SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVES WITH FOOTBALL PLAYERS

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### Introduction

Psychological aspects are linked to all the trajectory of a football player, through different times of his career: the beginning of the sport, in the childhood; the beginning of the competitions and the start of the pro activity; career transitions, like changes of team, injuries, personal difficulties; the end of the football activity.

In every moment of the football player's path there may be diverse levels of psychological needs: strengthening of the sport's competences, support for a circumscribed moment of distress or for an injury, psychotherapeutic intervention for a psychopathologic situation, through a progression of gravity.

### Issue

The experience presented has been matured in Bologna, since 2009, within a collaboration between Mood, Center for the Cure and the Study of the Emotional Distresses, and Isokinetic Medical Group. In these years it was formed a collaboration where psychiatrists and sport physicians, psychiatrists and psychotherapists work in team for the management of the psychological aspects related to the football activity. In relation to the patient's need, the care path could start with a physiatrical, psychiatric or psychological consultation.

The evaluation of the psychological aspects is made by clinical interview and psychodiagnostic questionnaires, to understand which perspective of intervention could suit better to the personal need. After the psychological assessment different strategies of intervention may be adopted:

- Strengthening of the sport competences: techniques of management of the psycho-physic tension, autogenic training, imagery, motivation.
- Psychological consultation for an injury: psychotherapeutic intervention on emotions and psychological dynamics related to the injury and the rehabilitation, relaxation techniques and management of the psycho-physic tension.
- Brief psychotherapeutic intervention, individual or in small groups, aimed to the resolution of a transitory psychological distress, related to a physical trauma or a personal situation.
- Long term psychodynamic psychotherapy.
- Psychiatric and pharmacologic intervention.

For each level of intervention data can be collected through standardized questionnaires like the Profile of Mood State (POMS) and the Tampa Scale of Kinesiophobia.

### Conclusions

In different moments of his career path, from the childhood to the retirement, a football player encounters peculiar psychological needs. The work and study experience, shows the value of the comprehension and the management of the psychological aspects, for the strengthening of the sport competencies as well as for the treatment of the pathological distresses.

Of particular value, therefore, will be the implementation of further researches, to describe the characteristics of the psychological dynamics in the football player's career and to evaluate the efficacies of specific psychological interventions.