



Lecture 12:

Pre – Competition Anxiety

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Hidden Saboteurs of Athletic Performance:

- **Pre – Competition Anxiety.**
- **Jet Lag.**

Pre – Competition Anxiety (PCA):

- Pre – competition anxiety (PCA) is a disorder commonly seen among athletes participating in any type of competition.

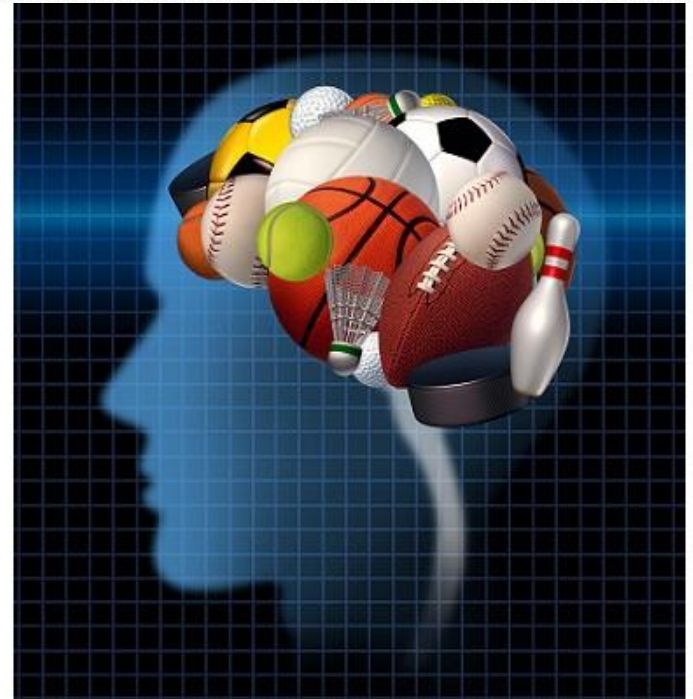


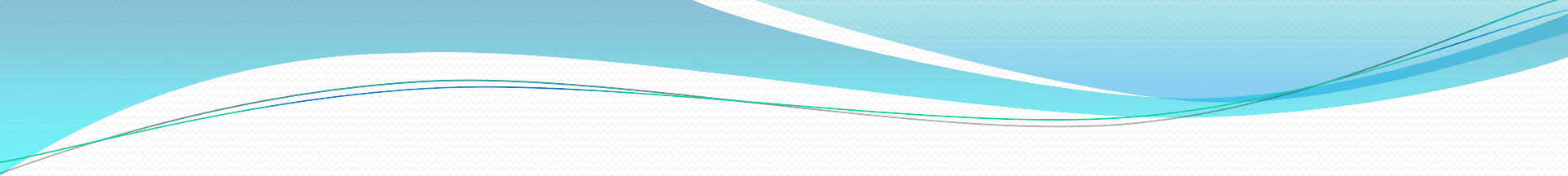
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- **It is normal for athletes to feel nervous before a competition.**
- **Pre – Competition anxiety usually starts few days before the competition and gets worse as competition time gets closer.**



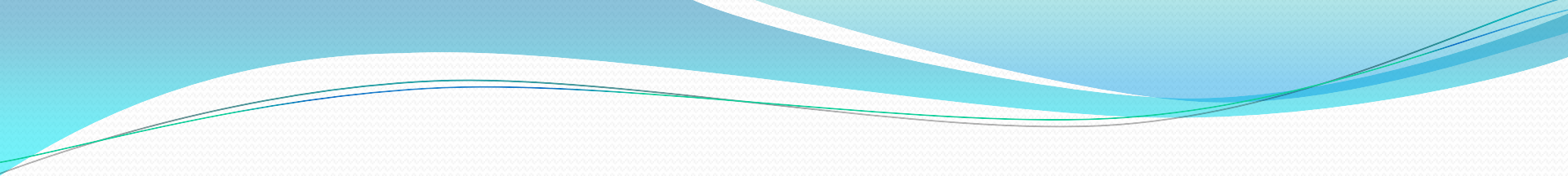
Signs and Symptoms of PCA:

- a) Preoccupation with competition.
- b) Poor concentration.
- c) Jitteriness and agitation.
- d) Sleep disturbances.
- e) Increased muscle tension.

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- **f) Clenched jaws.**
 - **g) Sweaty palms.**
 - **h) Increased heart and breathing rates.**
 - **i) Gastrointestinal disturbances, such as stomach upset, loss of appetite, early satiety, flatulence and feeling full.**

Consequences of PCA:

- a) **Decreased athletic performance.**
- b) **Athletic discrepancy disorder.**
- c) **Increased risk of post – exercise rhabdomyolysis (PER).**
- d) **Loss of competitive drive.**

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- **e) Decreased motivation and self-confidence.**
 - **f) Triggering IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome).**

Management and Nutritional Supports for Pre – Competition Anxiety (PCA):

- It would be a good idea to discuss your nervousness and anxiety with your coaches and a sport psychologist if available.
- **Sport psychologists** use different techniques to handle pre – competition anxiety.

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- **Dietary changes and food supplementation** help athletes cope easier with pre – competition anxiety.

Restricted Foods:

- a) Refined sugars.
- b) Alcohol.
- c) Coffee.
- d) Chocolate.
- e) Candies, cakes and cookies.
- f) Caffeinated drinks.
- g) Carbonated beverages.

Recommended Foods:

- a) Whole grains.
- b) Legumes.
- c) Nuts.
- d) Lean proteins.
- e) **Fruits high in serotonin:** dates, bananas, and papayas. **Serotonin is the main hormone in the body involved in controlling anxiety.**

- f) **Foods high in tryptophan:** milk, turkey, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, spirulina, soybeans, and oats. **This amino acid converts in the body into serotonin.**
- g) **Foods high in inositol:** cantaloupe, citrus fruits (except lemons), brewer's yeast, wheat germs, cabbage, nuts, seeds, and legumes. **Inositol involves in nerve transmission and eases nervousness.**

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- **h) Ginger.**
 - **i) Chamomile tea.**

Recommended Supplements:

- a) **Omega-3:** 2 – 3 grams a day. This essential fatty acid has a calming effect.
- b) **Magnesium:** 400 – 600 mg a day.
- c) **Calcium:** 1000 mg a day.

- d) **5 – Hydroxytryptophan (5 – HTP)**: 200 – 300 mg a day. 5 – HTP increases serotonin level and reduces anxiety. *CAUTION*: 5 – HTP should not be taken in combination with anti-depressant and anti-anxiety medications.
- e) **Melatonin**: 6 – 9 mg a day. It improves sleeping quality and promotes relaxation.

- f) **GABA (Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid):** 500 – 1500 mg a day. It eases nervous tension and promotes relaxation.
- g) **L – Theanine:** 200 – 400 mg a day. This amino acid improves concentration and reduces irritability and anxiety.
- h) **Inositol:** 500 – 1000 mg a day. Inositol involves in nerve transmission and eases nervousness.

- i) **Saint – John`s wort:** 600 – 900 mg a day. This herb contains hypericin that elevates mood and helps with anxiety. Caution: do not take this product along with other anti-anxiety medications.
- j) **Valerian root:** 450 – 900 mg a day. It has a calming effect and shows better results if combined with passion flower.

- k) **Passion flower extract:** as a capsule, 450 – 900 mg a day, as a dried herb, 3 – 6 grams, as a tea, 2 – 3 times a day, or as a tincture, 5 – 10 ml a day .

It promotes tranquility. This plant contains flavonoids that are responsible for its anti-anxiety activity.

Passion flower shows better results if combined with valerian.

Homework:

- 1) Describe consequences of pre – Competition Anxiety.
- 2) List at least five supplements that help with anxiety before competition.



