





Career Termination in Athletes: Identity Loss and Mental Health Strategies


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R e v i e w e r s

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1. Round 1

1.1 Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The opening paragraph states “up to 35% of retired athletes experience clinically significant mental health symptoms in their first-year post-retirement” without referencing sport type or demographic breakdown. Consider specifying whether this prevalence differs by gender, sport type, or retirement voluntariness.

While the paragraph on cultural and gender differences is informative, the discussion of LGBTQ+ athletes is limited to one sentence. Expanding this with examples or referencing recent empirical work could deepen the contribution.

The session structure is described, but there is no detail on the narrative identity exercises. Providing an example of a typical exercise would aid reproducibility.

In “Athletes from individual sports demonstrated more pronounced identity reduction...” it would be beneficial to include the statistical significance value for this between-group difference.

While the table shows F-values and effect sizes, confidence intervals are absent. Adding them would improve statistical transparency.

The finding that LGBTQ+ athletes faced “protracted challenges” is important but underdeveloped. Expanding on recommended targeted interventions could increase applied value.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

1.2 Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The statement “neuroimaging studies... reshape brain networks associated with self-concept and reward processing” is compelling but lacks a specific citation to a neuroimaging study. Including a recent fMRI-based reference would improve scientific grounding.

The phrase “roleless role” syndrome is used without definition for readers unfamiliar with the term. Provide a brief operational definition and cite its origin in sport psychology or sociology literature.

The “performance body paradox” theme is insightful but presented without direct connection to physical activity data. Linking qualitative findings to quantitative PA data could strengthen the mixed-methods integration.

The comparison to Smith et al. (2023) is useful, but the discussion could further explore why the identity reduction in this study is slightly lower (32% vs. 37.5%).

The claim that “physical activity plausibly preserves mastery experiences and neurobiological regulation” is strong but speculative. Consider citing neurobiological evidence (e.g., BDNF studies) to support this.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.