

Special Issue on Single-Case Research in Sport Psychology-Editorial

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Special Issue on Single-Case Research in Sport Psychology

Editorial

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### Editorial: Single-Case Research in Sport Psychology

The seminal work of Kazdin (1982) and Barlow and Hersen (1984) into single-case research has prompted many repeated calls for sport psychologists to adopt these methods into their research and practice (e.g., Bryan, 1987; Hrycaiko & Martin, 1996; Smith, 1988; Williams, Hardy, & Mutrie, 2008). These calls seem appropriate on at least three levels. First, demonstrating consultancy effectiveness and accountability are key components of accreditation programmes (e.g., Association of Applied Sport Psychology; British Psychological Society), along with professional practice, and applied research (Andersen, Miles, Mahoney, & Robinson, 2002; Smith, 1989). Second, single-case designs (SCDs) permit researchers working in applied settings and with small samples, procedures with which to determine the mechanisms related to intervention effectiveness and efficacy (Seligman, 1995). Finally, other branches of psychology (e.g., psychiatry, counselling, and education) embraced single-case research methods many years ago and now see them as integrative to applied research (cf. Morgan & Morgan, 2009).

The profile and abundance of SCDs in sport psychology has steadily increased during the last 30 years (see Barker, McCarthy, Jones, & Moran, 2011; Hrycaiko & Martin, 1996; Martin, Thomson, & Regehr, 2004) and with this increase we feel it is now appropriate to draw this area together and highlight the significance of SCDs in sport psychology. To date, no journal publication has included a special issue on SCDs in sport psychology. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that we present this special issue of the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology (JASP)*. The aims of this volume are twofold. First, to provide the *JASP* readership with a representation of cutting-edge research papers reflecting contemporary SCDs. Second, to provide commentaries on SCD elements including design, analysis, methodological procedures, and applications. We anticipate the volume will act as a contemporary resource for individuals involved in applied sport psychology research or

professional practice. We hope that this collection of works will provide an increased awareness of idiographic research as a credible approach in sport psychology. To achieve our aims for this volume we have received submissions from a number of world leading experts in single-case research methods and applied sport psychology. We are delighted with their contributions in helping us to fulfill the aims of this current volume.

Our introductory editorial here is followed by 11 articles comprising original research, reviews, and commentaries. The first article authored by the Guest Editorial team provides a review of SCD research in sport psychology from 1997 to 2012. In this review, the body of research is summarized, its limitations highlighted, and areas for further investigation outlined. Following our review the volume is then organized into three distinct themes. The first theme focuses on innovations in SCDs and methods and includes three commentary articles. First, McDougall presents two SCD innovations, in the forms of the range-bound and distributed-criterion design options, and comments on the application of these designs to sport and exercise psychology. Second, Gage and Lewis provide an up-to-date rationale for using statistics in SCDs and outline various innovations in analysis to determine effect. Finally, Page and Thelwell discuss the value of social validation in SCDs, providing an overview of typical procedures adopted and suggestions for future research.

The second theme of the volume explores four original applied research articles adopting contemporary SCDs. In article one, Messagno and Marchant report the effects of high and low pressure situations (using a SCD as a framework) in choking-susceptible and choking-resistant participants' netball shooting. Loukus and colleagues in the second article explore the effects of using a behavior modification strategy (i.e., financial contingencies) on golf performance. Article three by Neil, Hanton, and Mellalieu demonstrates the effects of a systematic cognitive-behavioral intervention on golfers' emotions and performance using a multiple-baseline design. Finally, in article four, Turner and Barker again draw upon a

multiple-baseline design and report the effects of a Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) intervention on irrational beliefs and anxiety in a sample of elite youth cricketers.

Theme three of the volume explores the extension of SCDs to other branches of psychology and sport science through three commentary articles. First, Gorczynski provides a brief review of literature regarding the use of SCDs in evaluating physical activity, exercise, and physical fitness interventions and then outlines recommendations for future research. Second, Kinugasa summarizes the key literature on the use of SCDs in the scientific support of elite athletes and provides a series of guidelines for future research and practice. The final article by Harwood and Steptoe discusses how SCDs can be used by applied sport psychologists in coaching contexts (including coaching effectiveness, the coach-practitioner relationship, and coaching behaviors).

We would like to thank all the contributors for their patience and diligence in responding to the editorial process, and the *JASP* Editorial Board, in particular, the Editor in Chief, Dr Dan Weigand, for his support in helping us to assemble this volume. We would also like to thank all the guest reviewers for giving their time to provide thorough and insightful reviews of the various submissions we received. We are, as always, greatly indebted to them, and this collection of works would not have been possible without their contribution and support. Lastly, we hope you enjoy this issue and that it provides a stimulus for discourse, increased awareness, and further SCD research and practice in sport and exercise psychology.

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