


CHAPTER 10

Burnout Syndrome in Sports

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ABSTRACT

Through cataloged data from studies already carried out, it was seen that Burnout has a set of symptoms for the syndrome. Those are assessed in three dimensions for its diagnosis within the labor and sporting scope. Therefore, it was visualized in the studies by Gustafsson that among 980 athletes from 58 different modalities, a considered part of them suffered with levels below the moderate of symptoms of the Burnout Syndrome. According to Goodger, 73 percent of the studies collected were from women who showed high levels of anxiety, tension and stress. It was also noted that part of the characteristics of Burnout Syndrome are physical and psychological problems that influence the physiology and may even develop symptoms of overtraining syndrome, preventing athletes from performing their potential in certain competitions or not progressing accordingly in training.

Keywords: Burnout, Physical Education, Psychology, Sport.

1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of physical activity to promote both physical and mental health has been well emphasized in researches (Vilela & Gomes, 2015). Unfortunately, in some situations and in some cases the sport practice professional athletes can go through major episodes of stress and frustration that can cause

defeats and even, in more serious cases, drive them away from the sport that is practiced (Turner & Jones, 2014).

According to Giglio & Rubio (2013), throughout the career of professional athletes it may occur that the professional or professionals, suffer influence in several ways, either by the media or even by the interests of their fans. There are those athletes who manage to live well a condition of being treated as celebrities and kept in evidence for longer, however, they are exceptions to the rule, since the vast majority cannot deal with this type of exposure. It is known that in the current high performance practice, an athlete's success can be defined from the public support, participations and mentions in sport programs and in reports that the media makes both on TV and social networks.

All the aforementioned factors influence the life of a professional athlete, regardless of the sport he or she practices, leading to possible millionaire contracts, which will cause great professional demands, stresses and charges in their lives. The stress caused by the media exposure, the overload during the daily work routine, the external demands and other factors cause an athlete to reach professional exhaustion (Giglio & Rubio, 2013).

For Oliveira et al. (2021), then arises a term Exhaustion Syndrome that comes from the psychology of work, which began to be inserted in the mentioned area, which is the *Burnout* Syndrome (BS). Although it is considered in the literature as a concept that is relatively new, its studies emerged, therefore, in the mid-1970s, but for psychology it is a subject that has been debated for a long time.

In general, the first author to mention BS in the sphere of general psychology was Freudenberg (1974; 1975), he was responsible for defining this syndrome as an exhaustion that comes from the excess demands of energy, strength or resources. The author also states that when working in a community clinic responsible for providing voluntary services to people who were in a condition of social risk, one realized that *Burnout's* state of exhaustion could be identified and discussed by the workers of the area. Due to the responsibility of meeting all the needs of people, a greater pressure and involvement arose that needed to be well managed so that both the professional and the volunteer would not be affected by *Burnout*.

Although the literature states that Freudenberg (1974; 1975), to this day, is considered to be the precursor of the scientific literature on *Burnout*, Maslach & Jackson (1981) are considered to be the protagonists of the first studies, as they were responsible for conceptualizing BS as a syndrome responsible for causing a process of both emotional exhaustion and cynicism, often occurring in individuals who perform certain work for other people. Subsequently, the authors developed a specific questionnaire for this syndrome, validating it as a measurement instrument, being called *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI), used until today to measure levels of *Bournout*. After performing a factor analysis, the authors were responsible for finding three dimensions or, also, denominated as being subscales responsible for explaining what is *Burnout*, considering emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment and depersonalization.

Therefore, according to the definition of Malasch & Jackson (1981), one can define BS as being a reaction to the process of emotional tension, considered as a consequence of an excessive and direct contact

with other people. Thus, the worker was worn out in such a strenuous way that he/she gave up or could no longer stand such tensions, going into *Burnout*. The authors also point out that this syndrome could be considered by means of a multidimensional evaluation as previously mentioned, causing the worker to lose involvement with the activities he/she performs.

Therefore, in general terms, *Burnout* can be defined as a significant loss of energy or complete burnout. Therefore, this is considered a syndrome in which the individual has lost the sense for the realization of things around him, nothing else matters, where any effort he makes, becomes useless.

Regarding the concepts, one can address conceptions that are more prominent in the literature regarding BS. Initially, the definition of Farber (1991) is highlighted, mentioning that BS can be considered as a work-related syndrome, originating in the discrepancy between the individual perception and between the effort and the consequence, a perception that can be influenced by several factors, individual, social and organizational.

In both the national and international literature, there are several concepts related to BS. Although these concepts are differentiated, depending basically on the authors, when analyzing them all, there is a consensus among them that this syndrome is considered a response to a daily stressor and an overload that is imposed on the individual. Several areas are affected by BS, including the educational and health areas, as a result of the impossibilities of the tasks that are required from these professionals, the great demands that are imposed on them and how much they are charged, which gradually make individuals come to collapse and thus develop this syndrome (Codo & Vasques-Menezes, 1999).

In the high performance or professional sports scenario, BS can be defined as a psychosocial syndrome which is responsible for involving feelings of emotional and physical exhaustion, devaluation of the sports practice and a low sense to perform a task (Gustafsson et al., 2008).

Seeing these symptoms and that high performance sports is framed as work, the athletes are at risk of developing BS. Freudenberg (1974/1975), makes it clear that what fits to be part of *Burnout* is to be within a labor context, i.e., to work and be working.

For this reason, BS is a phenomenon that may affect athletes, members of the technical committee, coaches and other players involved in the sport. However, its identification needs further investigation by the scientific and sports community, since knowing how to identify and distinguish BS in just one bad moment in an athlete's career is still complex, since BS is a process that is increasingly more present in the sports environment than one can imagine.

Thus, this work has the following guiding question: How does BS impact the career of high performance athletes and members of technical committees?

To answer this question, the general objective of this work is to investigate through literature how the establishment of BS and its consequences for athletes occurs.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research is configured as a narrative review in which it is supported by the exposure of ideas and points of view based on the bibliographic reference that relates to a given topic. According to Rother (2007), narrative review articles are appropriate publications to describe and discuss the development of a given topic, considering the theoretical and/or conceptual point of view.

Thus, the texts addressed constitute an analysis of scientific literature, interpretation and critical analysis of the author. It is important to consider that, despite its scientific evidence being considered lower than other types of reviews due to the impossibility of reproducing its methodological path, narrative reviews bring the possibility of contributing to the debate on certain issues, pointing out issues to be raised and collaborating in the production and updating of the literature (ROTHER, 2007).

The process of collecting the material presented in this study occurred in a non-systematic manner, using the scientific databases Scielo and Google Acadêmico with the following descriptors: "Burnout Syndrome in Sports" and "Burnout Syndrome in Athletes". The materials were read in their entirety, grouped into categories and critically analyzed.

3 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REVIEW

3.1 BURNOUT SYNDROME: THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

In the area of sport, BS may be defined as a condition that causes physical and emotional exhaustion, which is associated with intense demands of training and competitions, as well as symptoms that vary from person to person. The author Raedeke (1997) presents and explains that BS may be considered, through the dimensions of "emotional and physical exhaustion", capable of "reducing the sense of accomplishment of the sports practice" and, consequently, a "sports devaluation".

According to this definition, burnout is a syndrome, that is, a set of symptoms, and is based on three dimensions: emotional exhaustion (characterized by feelings of extreme fatigue); depersonalization (negative feelings towards clients, illustrated by impersonal, disconnected and careless behavior towards them) and, finally, reduced job satisfaction (negative evaluations about oneself, particularly with reference to the ability to succeed in working with clients) (RAEDEKE 1997, p. 397).

Exhaustion of physical and emotional capacities is understood as an association of intense demands of training and competitions that cause reactions such as anxieties, tensions and stresses that will cause high levels of physical and psychological fatigue. With regard to reducing the sense of accomplishment of the sport practice, as being a dissatisfaction that is related to a sport ability and skill that may be defined by a lack of progression in athletic performance and perceptions about the lack of success and the absence of a particular talent, finally with regard to sports devaluation, it may be considered that it is an association with a negative and indifferent attitude by means of some important event in a given domain manifested mainly by the occurrence of lack of desire, lack of interest and absence of caring about the sporting activity (Raedek & Smith, 2001).

According to Oliveira et al. (2021), one of the main symptoms of BS during its initial phase is a vertiginous drop in performance, which is a sign that the athlete is affected by this syndrome and, this worsens even more with pressure on the athlete. In many cases, the athlete needs to win in order to continue to compete and to make correct plays to acquire confidence. However, the impossibility of accomplishing it, only causes an increase of tensions, where the results considered positive do not appear and his/her performance starts to fall, his/her trainings start to be demotivated and BS is installed. Such situation begins to repeat itself in a rampant manner and, as a final result, the complete giving up occurs. In addition, an extremely relevant factor is the identity loss, an important alteration that has a direct relationship with the athlete's involvement (Vissoci, et. al., 2020).

In this sense, it is essential that professionals working in Physical Education and sports in general know how to deal with BS, being able to identify and develop prophylactic measures throughout their activities. Therefore, the distinction of this syndrome from other problems that may affect the professional life of a sportsperson should be considered as an important factor to the main skills of Physical Educators who work with high performance athletes (Oliveira et al., 2021).

In his literature review, the author Oliveira et al. (2021) concluded that there are several factors that can cause exhaustion in an athlete and, subsequently, cause the withdrawal from practicing a certain modality, such as overtraining, *overreaching*, and fatigue, among others. However, all these phenomena should not be confused with BS, which is an event that occurs after these phenomena. Therefore, the authors mention that there is a confusion in the literature of concepts and definitions regarding these phenomena and, however, it is necessary to note where each one of them arose in order to differentiate them, taking care with the idea that everything that is occurring with an athlete will be considered *Burnout*, because some athletes who leave the sports practice, who no longer have it as the objective of their lives and start to perform another activity, this event does not represent BS.

Another preponderant factor in an athlete's career is external pressures. The demands of winning, excessive demands by parents or coaches, comparisons between family members or even those made with technically better athletes in the same group, and the demands of performing a certain modality with exquisite perfection all contribute to the emergence of BS.

The consequence is that the athlete ceases to exercise his profession for pleasure, where the game is characterized in the search of a victory and the winning must occur at any cost. In addition, sport managers and technical committees, in their majority, only have eyes for the victory and forget that the athlete is and should also be treated as a human being, who may be affected by psychic, physical and even emotional variables, and with this, they end up forgetting the pleasure, that same one, in a day, was one of the responsible factors for making them start in the sport practice. In sport, the importance given to a competition overrides any need (Benevides-Pereira, 2002).

All this overvaluation related to victory can be linked to another event that is referred to overtraining. According to the authors Jones and Hardy (1990), a competitive performance is basically

dependent on the association of three factors which are the technical, physiological and psychological. Regarding psychological factors, stress is considered as one of the most important and, several times, it is responsible for determining a success in relation to sport performance.

Jones and Hardy (1990) say that sport training that is carried out continuously causes stimuli considered as being permanent, promoting successive adaptations of psycho-physiological nature in the athlete's organism. All these adaptations are considered as positive, i.e., they are able to strengthen the physical and psychological body to face the demands that in turn end up being even more rigorous.

However, physical stress in excess produces consequences that are not always positive, and may cause overtraining that, according to Gould et al. (1997), may be considered as a precursor to the origin of BS.

This excessive training load and the excessive competitions can also harm the social part of the athlete. Due to the high demand, he has no time to enjoy his family, friends or any other activities that can provide him pleasure and, it is implied, especially in athletes with less age, because their childhood will end even earlier, due to the enormous accumulation of responsibility that, in most cases, the athlete is not yet fully prepared to face these challenges. Thus, he ends up entering in a process known as *Burnout*, where there is the desire to have a "normal life", that is, to do what his friends of the same age do. Therefore, it is mentioned that professionals should let children get involved from activities outside the competition and training environments. They should let the children be children. By no means a young athlete can be confused with the young athlete (Gould et al., 1997).

All these analyses were important to combat the process of early specialization in sporting activities. This is common to observe in younger athletes that are subjected to great loads of trainings more and more specialized that aim only at results and accomplishment of immediate objectives. According to Paes (1992), the whole process of an increasingly precocious specialization needs to be postponed, because it becomes something harmful for the development in a harmonic way, with respect to learning the sport techniques, besides the moral values, where such importance needs to be worked and, mainly, stimulated with the students. The process of earlier and earlier specialization may be considered as being only one more of the several factors that are correlated to the unleashing of *Burnout*, leading the athlete to give up the sport earlier and earlier. This is because, the earlier this specialization occurs, the worse the consequences will be because young people end up leaving the sport modalities early due to the demands imposed on them.

A recent study suggests that both age and gender did not show any difference in the development of BS. However, according to the same author (Rodrigues, et al., 2021) athletes practicing individual sports, BS is even higher when compared to those who practice collective sports. For Smith (1986), this fact occurs due to the fact that they are more competitive, which allows them to have a greater physical and psychological demand due to its repetitive and monotonous nature and with less social support during training. However, according to De Rose (2001), in a study about the stress of adolescents in the modalities of basketball, soccer, swimming and tennis, it was observed that the female athletes had higher significant

levels of stress in comparison with the male athletes. Still in relation to the mentioned study, among all the sportive modalities that were studied, it is considered that tennis was the one that presented a high level of stress when compared to the others due to being an individual sport with enormous pressure.

3.2 *BURNOUT* SYNDROME: INSTRUMENTS TO ANALYZE BS

As regards the inventories to analyze BS in athletes, Silvério (1995) was responsible for developing the *Burnout* Inventory for Athletes (IBA), being responsible for investigating six factors that in the author's view are considered the main ones to evaluate the exhaustion of athletes, which are discouragement, absence of energy, expectations of inefficiency, the amount of exhaustion, lack of interest in the sport practice and excitability. This is an inventory, formed by 27 questions, which are answered by means of a Likert type scale with five alternatives that vary from "totally disagree" to "totally agree". The author states that it is very important to have inventories to measure and assess the state of BS development in athletes and that it should not be based only on common sense, but rather, to seek concrete, safe and reliable information through science.

In addition to the aforementioned inventory, it may be mentioned that in the sports sphere, the most used instrument to measure *Burnout* is the *Athlete Burnout Questionnaire* (ABQ) (Raedeke & Smith, 2001). This inventory consists of 15 questions that are responsible for assessing the frequency of feelings that are related to the syndrome. In each item, it refers to one of the following three dimensions of *Burnout* in athletes, which are physical and emotional exhaustion, reduction in the sense of accomplishment of the sport practice and sport devaluation (RAEDEKE, 1997).

In this questionnaire, the answers are provided based on the Likert type scale, with five points, ranging from 1- "almost never"; 2- "rarely"; 3- "sometimes"; 4- "often"; and 5- "almost always". Regarding the results, they are measured from an arithmetic mean of the answers that were given for the five criteria that correspond to each dimension. The total *Burnout score* is given by the average of all fifteen items present in the inventory. The interpretation of the scores must be performed from the variation of the frequency related to the feelings, that is, if the athlete has an average of 2.8 in the dimension of sport devaluation, it may be considered that this athlete has feelings related in this subscale with a frequency from "rarely" to "sometimes" (Raedeke & Smith, 2001)

The whole process of identifying such syndrome cannot be performed only by psychological instruments. It is recommended that the direct contact with the coaches and other professionals of the technical committees who experience the day to day of the trainings also provide evidence of the occurrence of BS. To be able to make such a finding, it is necessary that the professional in question has knowledge about what the BS is, how it is established and how it develops. However, it is necessary to mention a caveat in the sense that there is a lack of literature on studies on the subject, therefore, it becomes more complicated to present which are the characteristic signs and symptoms of such syndrome. Therefore, the biochemical measurements are considered as indirect demonstrators of the factors responsible for limiting

the sports training, as is the case of overtraining, which may result in the occurrence of BS. Authors Weinberg and Gould (2001) consider as emotional symptoms of BS loss of interest and absence of desire to play, mental exhaustion, absence of concern, symptoms of anxiety, depression, stress, fear, among others. Thus, several strategies need to be used to prevent or reduce the likelihood of the onset of BS.

3.3 CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF *BURNOUT* SYNDROME

Verkhoshanski (2001), a scholar in the field, in the early 1990's, pointed out some aspects of that moment of sport development, implying in problems and challenges that may be overcome, thus giving rise to new understandings on the preparation process, culminating in procedures supported in a precision of technological follow-ups and in methods of high demand. The author listed five requirements. The first of them is related to a constant increase in the levels of the sportive results, forcing the athletes and technicians to have the capacity of exploring more and more the limits of the performance of high level of demand, what will reflect in a methodological-organizational process. The second one is related with a tension that is promoted from the obtaining of results and an increase in the amount of athletes that need to obtain results of very high level, what is responsible for promoting increases regarding quality, stability and performance in technical and tactical aspects, as well as in the inter and intrapersonal capacities. The third question is related to a difficulty in making a progression in the intensity levels of the preparations, which demands a constant exploration in the items that can mean an increase in the effectiveness of the special physical training. The fourth one is related to the constant increase of training volumes, which promotes the appearance of problems related to the investigation of the relations considered to be the most effective among the loads of the most different orientations of the special physiology and in the combinations of cycles related to the loads preparation, among others. Finally, the fifth requirement is the importance that must be given to the science of processes related to training due to the high levels of demand that are recommended in training and, later, in competitions, which must have a high level of quality for the performance of its participants. The athletes started to be demanded in their functional systems with enormous relevance what needs scientific knowledge (Verkhoshanski, 2001).

The causes of *Burnout* are related, in particular, to relationship difficulties with the coaching staff and/or coaches, with the greater competitive demands, with the monotony of training, with the absence of sporting skills, with the feeling of disappointment of initial expectations with the final results that were obtained, with financial interests, be of the entrepreneurs or even of the parents, with the absence or in the reduction of the personal life out of the sport, with the absence of family support or friends, in the excessive demands of energy and time, with isolation feeling by means of the technical team and, finally, with the lack of positive efforts in the obtained results (Garcés de Los Fayos & Vives,2002).

On the other hand, the consequences of such a syndrome reach the physical dimensions, causing reductions in energy levels and an increase in susceptibility to illnesses and sleep-related disorders, with the behavioural dimension that gives rise to feelings of depression, anger and abandonment (Smith, 1986)

and, finally, with the cognitive dimension that promotes perceptions of overload, abandonment and low achievement in the face of boredom (Fender, 1989).

Burnout is not a syndrome that affects only athletes, but also members of technical committees. In a study conducted by Weiberg and Gould (2001), they reported that the syndrome in members of technical committees and technicians involved in professional sports modalities, as well as academy teachers, administrators and physical education teachers, are affected.

Weinberg and Gould (2001) consider as the main stressors for professionals the differences between genders, the pressures that are imposed to win, parental and/or administrative interference or indifference, indiscipline problems, responsibility in developing multiple roles within the training of an athlete, travel commitments, intense personal involvement, differences related to age, experience, training styles, social support, among others.

As far as professional athletes are concerned, external pressures are also important for determining their lives. The demands for victories, whether from parents or coaches, comparisons with siblings or better players in the group, and demands regarding perfection are factors that can contribute to the emergence of stress and what used to be a passion becomes a nightmare due to psychological discomforts (Caruzzo et al. 2020).

In this sense, athletes stop playing for the simple pleasure of competing and seeking victory. Winning starts to have a connotation of obligation, i.e., it becomes necessary to win at any and all costs. Along the search for the causers of the pressures regarding the athlete, it is common to find in the literature culprits in a direct way. Such condition is installed in a common sense that the sport managers and technical committees demand from the athletes only the victory and disregard what may cause physical and psychological disturbances in the athletes, forgetting, thus, the pleasure that is to accomplish the trainings and to participate in the competitions that one day were responsible for initiating the sport practice.

The importance of the competitions and of the victories stand out to the needs of obtaining the pleasure that is the practice of sport, then, it can be observed, also, the media as a great influencer, because at times it makes an athlete idol and, when the same is in a bad phase, fails or causes the loss of an important competition, the media disappears, no longer considering it as useful, starting to ignore its existence. In other words, in sport, one day you have basically everything, invitation to events, high fees, television programs, exposure on the Internet and, the next, the athlete no longer has any of this, being simply forgotten (Oliveira et al., 2021).

Apart from that, it can be observed that excessive training loads and, consequently, of competitions, are also important in the sense of coming to cause damages to the social part of the life of an athlete. This, because due to the commitments that the athlete has with his professional life, he no longer has his social conviviality or time to perform satisfactory activities, which cause him pleasure (Oliveira et al., 2021).

The act of losing the social life, especially for the youngest athletes, implies in a process of reduction of childhood and youth, accumulating a responsibility that in most of the times, they cannot deal with

certain subjects that effectively belong to the individuals who are adults. In this context, this fact is determined as one of the causes for the occurrence of *Burnout* (Oliviera et al., 2021).

For the author Smith (1986), *Burnout*, needs to be considered responsible for involving an escape, be it in the psychological or emotional sphere and, in some cases, physical, due to pleasurable acts as a form of responding to the excessive level of stress or dissatisfaction. It is known that the absence of pleasure and the valorization of their performance are for the athletes the primordial alterations presented, are the responsible for causing prolonged periods of stress, leading, in many cases, to the exhaustion of the athlete (Gould et al., 1997).

In the sport considered as professional or high performance, excellence is always sought as a fundamental piece to obtain success. Thus, the occurrence of diseases that may delay or interrupt the professional life of high performance athletes is not allowed, as it needs to be healthy and long lasting. Attention must also be directed to people who practice a given sport as a way of avoiding a sedentary life, given that they cannot be run over by these ills while they seek a better quality of life for their daily lives (Gould et al. 1997).

The process of overvaluing the victories may cause another event, an over training, as alerted by the authors Jones and Hardy (1990). Competitive performances depend basically on the combination of technical, physiological and psychological factors. One may mention that among the psychological factors, stress is considered to be one of the most important and, several times, it is responsible for determining the success or failure of the performance. The sportive training that is accomplished in a continuous way, causes permanent stimuli, promoting successive psycho-physiological adaptations in the individuals' organisms, where such adaptations are considered as positive, because they are responsible for strengthening the organism physically and psychologically so that it can face the demands that are increasingly considered as being rigorous.

Therefore, the BS that is present in the world of sports must already be considered as one of the factors responsible for limiting the development of athletes, especially the youngest ones. It is very common for athletes who reach the professional level to give up the sport practice, abandon their careers for not being able to withstand the excessive pressure and the very high level of demand. If they do not have psychological accompaniment, they will not be able to "survive" in the sporting world (Gould et al., 1997).

The relationship between stimuli, reactions and all the adaptations of the organism are represented by stress. However, excessive physical stress has its consequences, which are not always considered positive. The excess of physical stress can cause overtraining. According to Gould et al. (1997), it can be considered as a precursor of BS.

According to Hellstedt (1995, p: 117),

The interferences social inter-relationships are also fundamental aspects for the establishment of an environment in favorable conditions for the process of formation of the athlete. For it is at home that the youngster develops his identity and this will reflect in his sport career. The successful career of an athlete can reflect of the conduct of the family towards this, the encouragement of the family, acquisition of values, besides the love and support necessary during the whole career.

Besides the aforementioned factors, the family can also have interferences, unfortunately, negative for a career of certain athletes, because the family bosom that would be responsible for all the support, becomes the center of demands, charges and comparisons considered quite unnecessary that are capable of causing expectations that are unrealistic and frustrate the athletes. Therefore, *Burnout* in athletes is a process that originates more markedly through the incompatibility of their plans and their initial goals with the sport modality. Due to the chronic socio-psychophysical demands that sport requires, one of the most striking characteristics that can occur is the abandonment of the sport modality (Oliveira et al., 2021).

3.4 MAIN THEORETICAL MODELS OF BS THAT ARE USED IN SPORT

In order to help explain the *Burnout* phenomenon, there are some theoretical explanatory models aimed at explaining this syndrome, which help to understand how this syndrome developed in people and, knowing how this process occurs, one can think of ways to combat and prevent it (Chiminazzo & Montagner, 2004).

The first model addressed was proposed by Smith (1986, p. 37), known as the Cognitive-Affective model. For the author, *Burnout* is considered to be "a reaction to chronic stress". According to the author's point of view, this syndrome is responsible for having physical, mental and behavioral components, presented from a remarkable characteristic that is the psychological, emotional and, several times, physical saturation of an activity that was previously sought after and very pleasant and with time ceased to be so.

Based on this model, in cases in which the athlete can no longer continue in the modality and leaves it due to interests in other activities of social nature or even in another sport, it is not configured as being a *Burnout*. In the occurrence of such syndrome, there is an elevation in the stress that is caused by training and competitions. As rewards, one can mention the satisfaction, the achievement of goals, the social prestige and the financial gains promoted by the sport remain at the same level, the athletes make the option to interrupt the sports and competitive career to pursue other activities (Smith, 1986).

In the theory of the Cognitive-Affective model proposed by Smith, there are some stages. The first stage is related to the situational demands, that is, the high demands that are imposed on the athletes, such as great training loads or even enormous pressure to achieve victory in a certain match and/or competition. When such demands of a certain situation have the capacity to overcome the potential resources, the stress phenomenon occurs. In the second stage, cognitive evaluation, individuals are responsible for evaluating and interpreting the situations in which they are inserted. The third stage, investigates the physiological

responses that appear according to the stress found in a situation that may be harmful or threatening, which may cause the athlete to increase tension levels, developing greater irritability and fatigue. Finally, in the fourth and last stage, the physiological responses appear according to the stress verified in a situation that is considered as harmful or threatening, which may cause some alteration in the behavior of control and of the task, with a reduced performance, having difficulty in the interpersonal relationships and eventual retraining of the activities (Weinberg; Gould, 2001).

On the other hand, the theoretical model of Coakley (1992) is responsible for having an essentially social perspective. In this *Burnout* originates because it is a consequence of a social structure responsible for associating an identity and dimension of the athlete's "I", directed solely and exclusively to the sport modality he/she exercises. Therefore, only by acquiring new experiences and life experiences, will the athlete be able to prevent or even reverse the *Burnout* condition. For this fact to really happen, a huge transformation along the sport social scenario is required. Literature considers that this model is of a more sociological nature.

The author Coackley (1992) argues that the *Burnout* process can be described as a simple tuning and that its cause, especially in athletes of younger ages, is directly related to the social organizational structure of high performance sport and its effects regarding questions about the process of identity and control. Still according to the author's reflection, this syndrome occurs due to the structure of sports that are highly competitive, which does not allow young athletes to develop an identity considered as normal, and thus, they cannot spend enough time with their peers outside the competitive environment. In the present study, the author also reports that the prevention of this syndrome would be to have the ability to increase a power of the young athletes, so that it can eliminate the two dependencies.

Finally, another model elaborated to explain the *Burnout* phenomenon is the Model of Negative Stress Responses to Training, which was constituted by Silva with the intent of promoting explanations regarding the *Burnout* phenomenon, focusing more on responses to physical training, although they recognize the importance of psychological factors. According to the author of this theory, *Burnout* may be defined as a psychophysiological response to exhaustion that comes to be displayed as the result of frequent efforts that are sometimes considered extreme, but in general are ineffective in dealing with the excessive training of high performance and the demands of a given competition (Silva, 1990).

Along this theory, the author Silva (1990), suggests that the physical training is one of the factors responsible for stressing the professional athletes in a physical and psychological way, which may cause both positive and negative effects. The positive effects are those that are frequently observed in the trainings as the improvement of the physical part, of the abilities, among others, being desirable results of a training process. On the other hand, excessive training can be harmful because it develops a negative adaptation response, resulting in overtraining, which can cause *Burnout* as a final product.

According to Paes (2002, p. 96), "at school or out of it, sport for children and youngsters must be proposed in the educational context". Thus, this becomes the greatest concern of physical education

teachers. Those who may wish to work with sport should not only be concerned with the technical level issues, with the motor and sportive gesture, with the motor skills of each one of their athletes, but they should also be concerned with the values and principles that guide and are inserted within the sport.

According to Paes (2002, p. 96), when working, for example, with younger athletes, the sport has to assume its function as a means to assist in the process of formation of the full development of the individual, a citizen possessing the full capacities to exercise its citizenship. Therefore, it is important to develop a formation of values, among them, highlighting trust, autonomy to take decisions, cooperation that contribute to avoid that the young athlete or even the professional athlete who practices a certain modality becomes affected by BS.

3.5 UNDERSTANDING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS AND SPORTS COMMUNITY REGARDING *BURNOUT* SYNDROME

In contemporary times, the demands related to sports go beyond a simple repetition and learning of the sportive gesture. In the same proportion and in the same evolution, the professional of the area of Physical Education, who has his/her function, goes beyond those ideas that he/she is a professional dedicated solely and exclusively to the technical training of athletes. It is known that the coach should be much more than an individual capable of teaching and training the specific sportive gesture of a certain modality. If it was like this, it was not necessary studies to become a coach, it would be enough just to have been a practitioner of the modality in which he/she wants to act (Chiminazzo; Montagner, 2004).

Therefore, the professional of the area of Physical Education, besides having all the theoretical training, must possess the capacity to be a professional that extracts values, forming integrated human beings, who are capable to preserve to the maximum their physical, psychic and mental health with satisfactory levels of quality of life. What it is observed in the current times is that it is not enough only to form athletes world champions at 14-15 years of age and that with 18 years of age they are abandoning certain sport, or in worse cases, along all this time, the athlete has not been guided, not receiving the due formation that he/she should to exercise his/her sport practice with quality. According to Paes (2002, p. 91), it is important that "the Physical Education professional understands sport and pedagogy in a broader way, turning them into facilitators in the education process of children and youngsters".

It can be verified that even working with sports at school, it becomes important that professionals trained in Physical Education have the ability to work with the sport, this because it will not always be in the sport and yes in the one who can work with it. It becomes fundamental that the professional has an ability to teach all the technical gesture, but it is as important to teach the values that are developed with the sport practice. Therefore, the education of young people needs to be directed to the world, forming citizens, so that they can exercise their role in society with integrity, active and always respecting the rights and duties (Paes, 2002).

In a professional sport sphere, it is also necessary that the physical educator has the ability to recognize the values and aggregating principles to sport and that they can be worked on continuously. In sport, to win is important, however, not primordial, the primordial is the development of individuals more and more integrated, who are capable of living in society, knowing how to respect the others and the social environment of which he/she participates, it becomes fundamental. In certain cases, the athletes are treated as if they were machines, not receiving any education besides the one that is considered necessary to be a winner. This reality needs to be altered, because one works with human beings, and one cannot allow them to be affected by problems of overtraining and episodes of BS that lead to a desistance of practicing certain modality (Chiminazzo & Montagner, 2004).

Another important factor to be considered is all the influence that the Physical Education professional comes to have with his athletes. It is very common that athletes reflect the personality of their coaches, that is, students fail to develop their own abilities and personality by mirroring themselves in the coach's figure. Therefore, it becomes important that the professional of Physical Education has the capacity to recognize the degree of its importance in the athletes' lives, since many times the time spent with the professional and the athlete is a much bigger time than the athletes spend with their families, especially with their parents (Chiminazzo & Montagner, 2004).

It becomes important, not only to inform the future Physical Education Professionals about the possibilities of the occurrence of BS in their athletes, but it becomes necessary that the professional is able to study the occurrence of such syndrome, its implications and, thus, the Physical Education Professional will be able to extend and to deepen its characterization seeking to know what their athletes think and feel, so that one can work not only the prevention of these problems, but preferentially, the promotion of a healthy global development of the already formed athletes and of the athletes in formation that are involved in the practice of the sportive activities (Chiminazzo & Montagner, 2004).

According to Gould et al. (1997), if coaches, parents and sport psychologists are familiar with all the characteristics of BS, they will be able to identify athletes who are suffering from *Burnout* and help them.

Finally, it is important to remember that the professionals who work in the area of Physical Education, whether they are educators, teachers and/or coaches are susceptible to suffering by BS. Therefore, it is very important that they come to know what is BS, that they can identify and fight and, mainly, prevent the emergence of such syndrome. The studies, researches and all materials need to be expanded in the literature, since the looks directed to BS are still scarce. For such a serious subject, there is a lack of studies. This syndrome has existed for a long time, but with a nomenclature that appeared recently, therefore, the national studies do not begin to crawl considering that the phenomenon plagues, for a long time, several athletes and sports professionals (Chiminazzo & Montagner, 2004).

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Burnout emerges as a response at a psychophysiological level, causing high exhaustion, many times at extreme levels resulting from excessive demands related to training and competitions. Therefore, such phenomena involve aspects of psychological and emotional levels and lead athletes to give up their objectives, that is, to perform a certain activity as a way to respond to stress levels or lack of satisfaction for performing a certain function. Thus, this syndrome can be characterized by a reaction to stress at a chronic level and its development represents a complex interaction between the environment, the personal and individual characteristics of each athlete.

The search through the literary material showed the most diverse motivations that lead a sportsperson to reach the extreme level, i.e., to exhaustion and, subsequently, to give up practicing what was his or her life for years, due to factors such as fatigue and overtraining. Therefore, it is essential that Physical Educators and Sport Educators in general, associated with the knowledge from psychology, know the concepts related to BS, know how to identify it and know how to deal with it along its emergence. Having the ability to differentiate and define such syndrome from other physical, social and psychological ills that may affect the life of a sportsperson becomes one of the physical educators' competences.

Considering the importance of the theme and the great relevance of information in this scope, both for the academic community and for the professional practice and athletes' health, it is still necessary and indispensable more studies about the Burnout Syndrome in high performance sport. In addition, subjects that involve a discussion about gender and the age range of the athletes are still scarce and can bring important elucidations, since it seems that there is a greater charge in female athletes and in athletes in formation.

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