

Narrative Chronology of Athletic Identity (AI), Sport Participation, and Spinal Cord Injury (SCI): Two Female Perspectives

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Background

- AI and team sport participation are indicated to assist with adjustment after SCI^{1,2} and foster a higher quality of life through physical and psychological benefits.^{3,4}
- Narratives regarding AI among individuals who experienced a long term physical disability describe the loss of AI, some redeveloped AI over a lengthy time⁵
- There is a significant lack of research related to women with disabilities⁶; similar trend exists in AI SCI research

Research Aim

To investigate how female athletes who experienced a SCI describe athletic identity over the course of their lifetime.

Methods

- Qualitative, phenomenological study
- Purposive convenience sampling
- 2 adult female athletes who experienced SCI
- Semi-structured interviews; Narrative analysis

References:

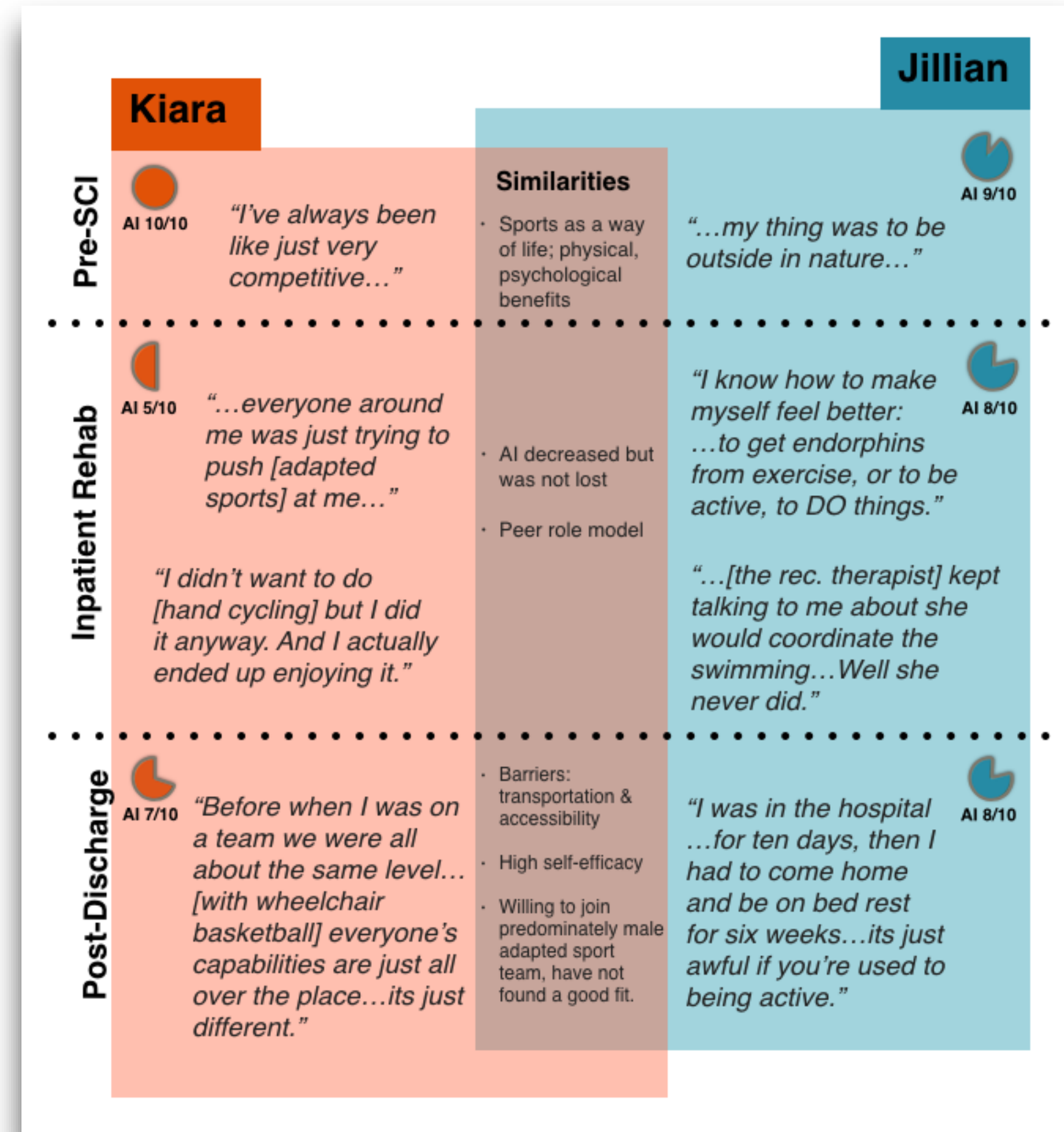
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Discussion

- Prior motivations for sports, SCI prognosis can influence: present/future oriented goals, openness to adapted sports
- Two nuances identified: AI decreased after injury but was not "lost"; evidence of quick, partial redevelopment of AI
- Noted AI supports: motivation favoring therapeutic effects; exposure to adapted sports during inpatient rehab; peer role model; high self-efficacy; accessibility

OS/OT Implications

- Tailor adapted sport discussions/experiences to acknowledge client narrative about prior sports, AI, and current goals
- Remove barriers; Increase self-efficacy through adapted sport experiences; Foster agency in preparation for future barriers
- Further explore trends in AI and sport participation after injury including any notable differences related to demographics, diagnosis, prognosis, patient goals
- Synthesize interdisciplinary research to generate a shared foundation of knowledge to support initiation or continuation of AI after SCI



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