The Value of Sport

Facilitating the health and wellbeing of university students in Australia

UniSport Australia
07 May 2024

Dr David Hughes
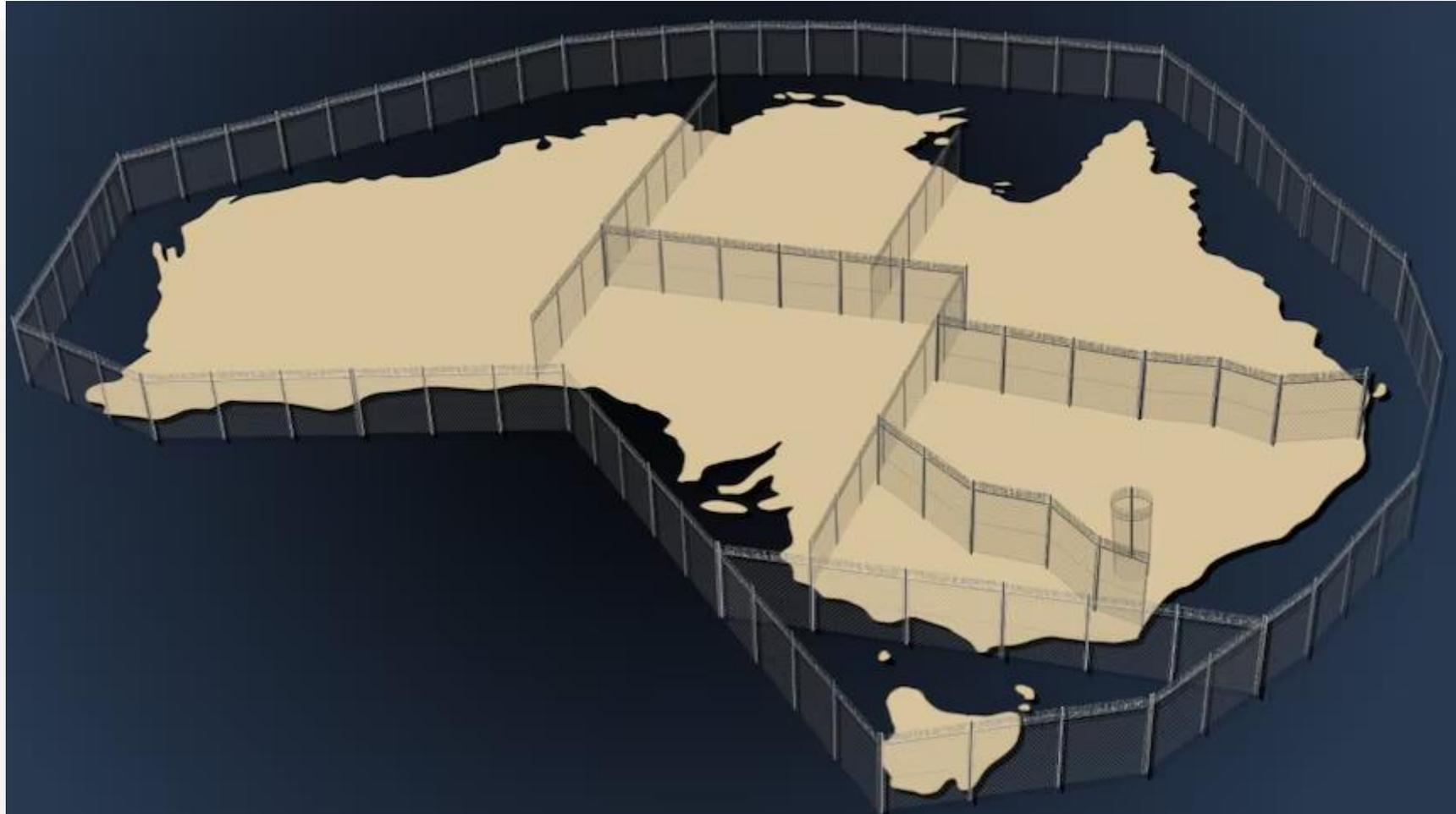
Chief Medical Officer, AIS

Australian Universities Accord – December 2023

The National Tertiary Education Objectives will be achieved through ensuring **affordable and equitable opportunity for all Australians** to access and participate in high-quality, **engaging** and transformative tertiary education programs

Challenges for Universities

Challenges for Universities

Competition among universities & non-traditional higher education providers for students is intensifying, both **domestically and internationally**

Domestic undergraduate growth has plateaued at approximately **1% per annum**, while the number of international students is continuing to grow

Students have **growing and changing expectations** of how they connect with both universities and education

strategy&
Part of the PwC network

Managing Change in Australian Universities

January 2020

Challenges for Students

Affordable and equitable opportunity for all Australians

Challenges for Students

Australian and international research suggests university students are experiencing heightened psychological distress

Academic and financial pressures

Isolation and loneliness

Poor self-care

Challenges for Students

SHORTER COMMUNICATION

Loneliness, Belonging, and Mental Health in Australian University Students Pre- and Post-COVID-19

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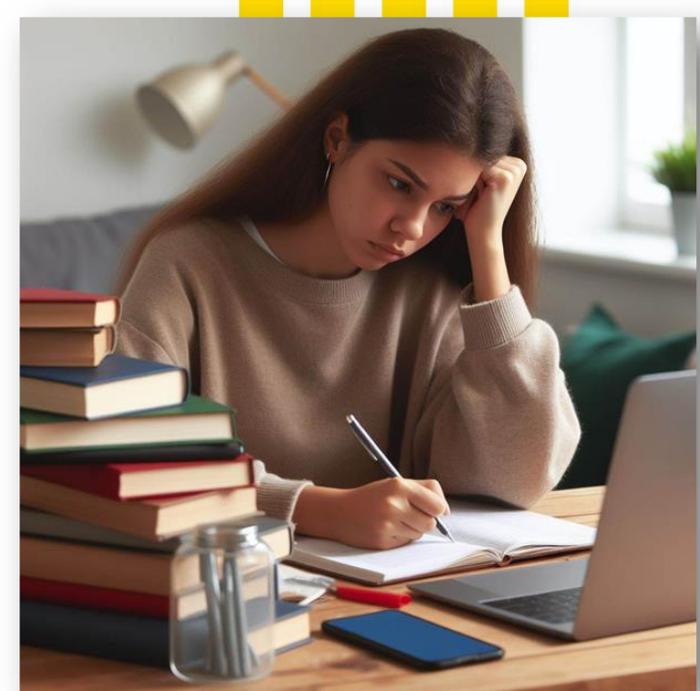
Challenges for Students

The move to **online learning** in the context of COVID-19 **social distancing and lockdowns** had a detrimental impact on students' **social connectedness**
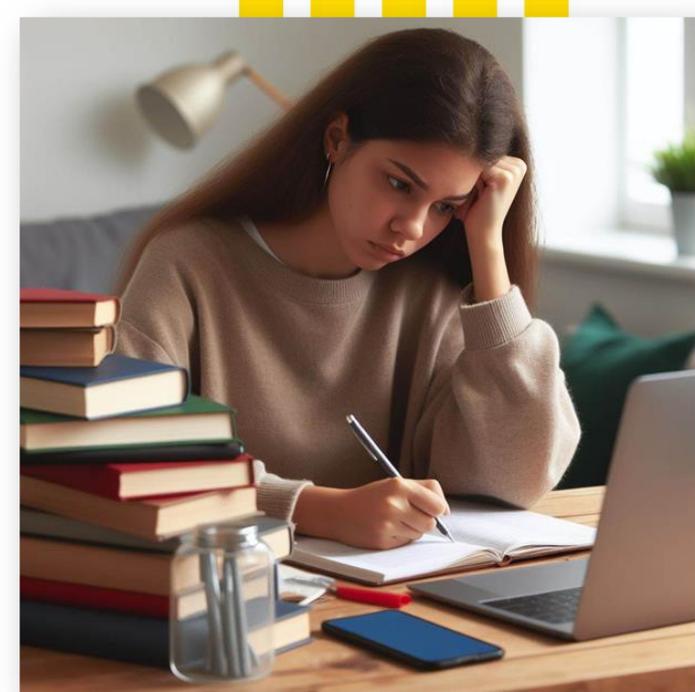
Loneliness, **low university belonging** and a **lack of multiple-group memberships**, was related to more causes of stress, more symptoms of psychological distress, and lower well-being

University administration has a role to play in developing and resourcing university-wide policies that **support the development of connections** between teaching staff and students, and among students

Challenges for Students

Articles

A sense of belonging among Australian university students

Evianne L. van Gijn-Grosvenor ✉ iD & Penelope Huisman iD

Pages 376-389 | Received 15 Nov 2018, Accepted 07 May 2019, Published online: 11 Oct 2019

66 Cite this article   ↗ https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1666256   Check for updates

📄 Full Article   🖼 Figures & data   📑 References   66 Citations   📊 Metrics   🖨 Reprints & Permissions   Read this article

What would help you to feel that you belong at Macquarie University?

Respect

Inclusion, acceptance of others

Opportunities to interact with other students, such as within clubs, societies and at events

Sport participation, health and wellbeing

Sport participation, health and wellbeing

Home › Systematic Reviews › Article

The impact of sports participation on mental health and social outcomes in adults: a systematic review and the 'Mental Health through Sport' conceptual model

Systematic review update | Open access | Published: 21 June 2023

Volume 12, article number 102, (2023) | Cite this article

Download PDF ⤓

Systematic Reviews

Aims and scope →
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- Overall mental health
- Mood
- Life satisfaction
- Self esteem
- Body satisfaction
- Health related quality of life
- Self-rated health
- Frequency of laughter

Team-based sports participation, compared to individual sports and informal group physical activity, has a more positive effect on
- **Mental energy**
- **Physical self-perception**
- **Overall psychological health and well-being**

(regardless of physical activity volume)

Sport participation and racial inclusion

RESEARCH ARTICLE

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY WILEY

"Even Though We Have Different Colors, We Are All Equal Here": Immigrants building a sense of community and wellbeing through sport participation

Chiara Corvino | Sara Martinez-Damia | Mattia Belluzzi | Daniela Marzana | Chiara D'Angelo

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Abstract
Although there are several studies reporting the beneficial role of sports in immigrant health, more research is needed to understand whether and how these activities can guide the psychological sense of community (SOC) and well-being outcomes. This study aims at exploring how sport participation among immigrants contributes to developing their SOC and subjective well-being. We analyzed the experiences of 17 immigrants participating in Balon Mundial (BM), an annual multicultural football tournament in Turin (Italy). A thematic deductive theory-driven analysis was implemented based on in-depth interviews. BM developed a psychological SOC by providing immigrants with a safe space—based on norms of accessibility and fair play—to mutually share traditions while forming positive and trusting bonds. All these dimensions of the tournament were connected to an enhancement of immigrants' subjective well-being in terms of happiness, self-care, sense of acceptance and cultural intelligence. Sport participation can sustain immigrants' psychological SOC and subjective well-being under specific conditions: (a) when norms are

Immigrants participating in an annual multicultural football festival in Turin (Italy)

Participation delivered a psychological sense of community by providing immigrants with a safe space

Able to share traditions while forming positive and trusting bonds

Enhancement of subjective well-being

Improved happiness, self-care, sense of acceptance

Improving mental health in tertiary education settings

Improving the
mental health of
young people in
tertiary education
settings

A POLICY EVIDENCE BRIEF

August 2021

Bojana Klepac Pogrmilovic, Melinda Craike, Michaela
Pascoe, Sarah Dash, Alex Parker, Rosemary Calder

mitchell INSTITUTE | **VICTORIA UNIVERSITY**

Young people (15-24 years) have the highest prevalence of mental health disorders or behavioural conditions of all age groups

75% of mental disorders emerge for the first time before the age of 24 years, which is the time when a large proportion of young Australians enrol in tertiary education

Improving mental health in tertiary education settings

What works to improve students' mental health?

1. Cognitive-behavioural therapy-based interventions;
2. Mindfulness-based interventions;
3. ==Physical activity, exercise, sport, and recreation interventions==
4. Dietary interventions, and;
5. Digital approaches.

Improving mental health in tertiary education settings

What works to improve students' mental health?

Exercise-based interventions had the **largest effect size for depression and anxiety**, larger than mindfulness-based interventions or interventions based on CBT

Substantial evidence of various **social, health and psychological benefits of physical activity, exercise, sport** and recreation across different age groups

Take home messages

Take home messages

The majority of undergraduate university students emanate from the age cohort most affected by mental health issues

The number of international student enrolments continues to grow and currently accounts for more than 25% of university enrolments

Sport is a potent tool for promoting a sense of **belonging**, **inclusion** of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, **human connection** and **social cohesion**

University administrators should feel **positively obligated** to foster the **growth of sport** in university settings, as a proactive & **evidence-based** means of contributing to **student health and wellbeing**

Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

AIS

Thank you

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