

Identifying Future Research Priorities in the Field of Interpersonal Violence (IV) Towards Athletes in Sport: A Delphi Study

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SUMMARY BOX

What is already known on the subject?:

- Although research on interpersonal violence (IV) towards athletes started in the early 1990s, it has recently gained much more attention.

What this study adds:

- This is a novel study to determine research priorities from the scientific community in the field of safeguarding athletes from IV.
- The four top research priorities are: *i*) documenting experiences of children in sport, *ii*) studying reporting and disclosure, *iii*) developing, evaluating and informing interventions targeting education and training, and *iv*) documenting the experiences of violence of para athletes.

How this study might affect research, practice, or policy.

- This study will inform the selection and justification of future research that addresses safeguarding athletes from IV.

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Scientific Contributions

SP contributed to the conception, study design and data analysis and drafted the manuscript. SR contributed to the conception, study design, data collection and analysis, contributed to the draft of the manuscript and reviewed the manuscript. OJA and JT contributed to the data collection and analyses and reviewed the manuscript. IVD, EK, ML, MM, AP, MW and TV contributed to the conception, the study design and review the manuscript.

Competing interests

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Ethical Approval Information

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Data are available upon reasonable request

Deidentified participant data could be made available by contacting the corresponding author (Sylvie Parent) at sylvie.parent@fse.ulaval.ca.

ABSTRACT

Objective. Our aim was to define the priorities for future research in safeguarding athletes from interpersonal violence (IV) in sport through a Delphi consensus study of researchers in the field.

Methods. An internet-based three-round Delphi method was used as a multi-stage facilitation technique to arrive at group consensus (set at $\geq 75\%$ agreement). A targeted literature search was conducted to develop a list of potential research priorities that were presented as short statements in the first round.

Results. A total of 52 participants (researchers in IV in sport) took part in the first round, 52 completed the second round, and 44 completed the third round. Respectively, 47 items, 83 items and 60 items were included in each round. The participants achieved consensus on 11 statements in the first round, 7 in the second round, and 31 in the third round, for a total of 49 consensus research priorities. The first four priorities that reached consensus (78.8% to 80.8% agreement) directly following the first Delphi round were scored with high importance (between 6.2 and 6.3 on a scale of 7). Those four priorities included: 1) documenting the experiences of children athletes and minors, 2) studying the disclosure or reporting of violence, 3) developing, evaluating, and advising on interventions targeting education and training, and 4) documenting the experiences of violence of para athletes.

Conclusion. This study defines research priorities for IV in sport that may elucidate further gaps in current policies and practices.

Keywords: Violence; Harassment and Abuse; Safe Sport; Sport Participants; Delphi

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, there has been a rapid increase in academic and social attention on interpersonal violence (IV) in sport towards athletes of all ages and levels of competition [1,2]. IV involves the use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group of individuals [3]. This growing interest has manifested in a considerable increase in the number of publications [1] and also in more awareness, policy actions and prevention initiatives on the topic of IV in sport around the world [4,5]. It is evident that significant strides have been made since the inception of research on this topic in the early 1990s [6]. For example, while historically sexual violence was the most documented type of IV, more recent research has investigated other

types of IV, such as psychological violence, physical violence, and neglect [7–12]. Moreover, authors have explored the prevalence and occurrence of diverse forms of IV toward athletes, such as body shaming [13], banter [14], bullying and cyberbullying [15], and virtual maltreatment [16].

Research on IV in sport has also evolved methodologically, moving from mainly qualitative designs to include more quantitative (although still mostly descriptive and cross-sectional) and mixed-methods approaches [1]. Moreover, recent research has sought to provide definitional and measurement clarity through the development of validated tools to measure the prevalence of IV, its components, manifestations, forms, and correlates. Indeed, validated tools such as the *Violence Toward Athlete Questionnaire* (VTAQ) [17,18], and the *Perceived Instrumental Effects of Violence in Sport scale* (PIEVS) [19] provide opportunities for researchers from different countries and contexts to measure IV using standardised, validated instruments, allowing for enhanced international comparison and a better documentation and evaluation of the effects of interventions.

Further demonstrating the growth of the field is the recent increase in systematic and scoping literature reviews conducted on the topic of IV in sport [20–26]. This growth has brought challenges as well as opportunities for the field to continue to advance conceptual and theoretical understanding of IV toward athletes as well as practical implications for safeguarding and what has become known as ‘safe sport’. Indeed, the above reviews have highlighted that theoretical and methodological improvements are needed in many areas, such as a) clarification of the boundaries between athletes and coaches [24], b) understanding of disclosures, sexual grooming and consent [20,24], c) organisational and cultural factors underpinning IV and its normalisation [26], and d) implementation, evaluation, and impact studies on prevention initiatives [25]. Some authors also emphasised the importance of studying IV from diverse research designs such as longitudinal, quantitative and mixed-methods [26], better use of theory-driven research [23–25], and studying the links between IV and other integrity issues in sport such as doping and match-fixing [21].

Despite the recent progress in the field of IV in sport, research priorities have not been clearly stated and compiled based on a consensus methodology. Considering the rapidly evolving domain of research regarding IV toward athletes in sport, there is a need to map future research priorities. Knowing those priorities will help researchers focus their research objectives and could also guide decision-makers in supporting research priorities. The aim of this study was to reach consensus on the priorities for future research in safeguarding athletes from IV in sport through a Delphi study of researchers in the field. To date, no other studies have addressed this gap.

METHOD

Delphi method

The Delphi method is a multi-stage group facilitation technique where individual experts arrive at group consensus on a given issue [27]. A group of experts (panellists) complete several rounds of questionnaires where they provide quantitative ratings and qualitative comments, which are then compiled by the research team. With every round, the panellists receive individualised feedback and can adjust their previous answers [27,28]. In the present study, an internet-based three-round Delphi method was used as a multi-stage facilitation technique to arrive at group consensus [27,28]. To limit attrition between rounds, we sent reminders to participants who had not completed the questionnaire one week before the deadline. Although we recognise that different groups (e.g. athletes, managers) have diverse expertise relative to IV in sport, it was decided that our “experts” would be researchers because the aim of the study was to obtain *research* priorities from the perspective of researchers in the field.

Survey consensus statements development

A targeted literature search was conducted to develop a list of research priorities that were written in the form of short statements for the first round. Those statements were based on the suggestions made by authors in the “future research” or “future direction” sections of published articles. The search was performed in relevant databases (PubMed, PsycINFO, and SPORTDiscus) using the terms shown in Table 1. The studies were included if they: 1) addressed IV toward athletes in the sport context; 2) were in English, French, or Spanish (based on team members’ language skills); 3) had been published since 2010 in peer-reviewed journals (for feasibility and recency reasons); 4) mentioned recommendations for future studies. The initial list of statements was based on 126 articles and was reviewed by the research team to ensure clarity and specificity. It was decided to remove suggestions regarding methodological aspects to be inclusive of all types of approaches. This process led to a list of 47 statements (see Supplementary data).

[Insert Table 1. Keywords used in the targeted literature review]

Participants

The inclusion criteria for participants were being a researcher (including graduate students) working in the area of IV against athletes and being able to read and write English to complete the survey. A purposeful sampling strategy was used to recruit through the *International Research Network on Violence and Integrity in Sport* (IRNOVIS) and authors of papers selected from the literature review. Members of the research team were allowed to participate in the Delphi without access to nominal information about other participants. Special attention was given to forming a panel that comprised experts from different disciplines/subject areas (e.g. sport science, psychology, criminology, sociology, sports medicine) and various geographical locations (based on their professional affiliation). Ethical approval was obtained from the [blinded for review] and all participants were provided with an information sheet on the study and signed a consent form before taking part.

Patient involvement

Given the objective of the study was to reach a consensus among researchers in the field of IV in sport, there was no involvement of patient or public.

Procedure

The procedure is described in Figure 1. The participants received an email with a link to the online platform Stat59 where they created an account. Stat59 is web-based platform that offers a software developed for Delphi studies. In the initial email, a definition of IV was included to ensure that the participants had a common understanding, namely:

Interpersonal violence (IV) involves the intentional use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group of individuals [3]. Interpersonal violence may be physical, sexual, or psychological, and it may involve deprivation and neglect.

In each round, the participants were asked to rate a list of statements, considering their importance as a priority for future research on a Likert scale from 1 (not important) to 7 (very important). Although the study team intended to select an 80% consensus threshold a priori, this was lowered to 75% following the first round of the Delphi due to a low number of items achieving the desired consensus threshold (n=2). 75% is considered an appropriate consensus threshold based on prior literature [28]. Between rounds, three research team members (who were not participants themselves) acted as Delphi managers to compile the data and produce personalised reports for each participant. In these reports, both the individual score and the group's mean score, the standard deviation, the agreement score for each statement and a synthesis of general comments were provided to the participants. The participants could compare their individual scores with the group's average. This process allows participants to reflect on their position and encourages them to move toward consensus [27,28]. In the first round, participants answered socio-demographic questions and had the opportunity to add up to five statements to be considered for inclusion as a priority for future research in later rounds.

[Insert Figure 1. Delphi procedure implemented]

In the first round, participants rated a total of 47 statements and 47 additional statements were suggested and included in the second round. In the open question section, several panellists mentioned that it was a difficult exercise given that all the research topics identified in the statements were considered to be important for the field. In the following report to the panellists, we acknowledged the complexity of the process. We reminded them that the goal was to obtain a consensus on priorities for future research and there were no right or wrong answers. As recommended [27], we aimed to remain as close as possible to the wording proposed by the participants. We also had to remove some statements that were related to methodological aspects since they were only indirectly related to the study's objective. After the analysis, there were 83 statements included in the second round. At this stage, comments from the open question identified important issues, namely that many statements were not focused on research. We therefore modified or removed 21 statements after round 2 to answer the study's objective of identifying priorities for future research. The third and final round contained 60 statements.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion statement

The author group is composed of women researchers, at junior, mid-career or senior levels from different areas. We purposefully recruited participants for the survey to reflect global representation including individuals from under-represented geographical locations. The diversity of the Delphi participants can be found in Table 2. Finally, several initial statements focused on improving inclusion of diversity of lived experiences in research on IV in sport (e.g., disability, ethnicity, geographical location).

Data analysis

Mean scores and standard deviations were computed using SPSS (v. 29). We used content analysis to analyse the open ended, qualitative items suggested by the participants in the first round. Participants' suggestions were integrated to improve the clarity of the current statements as well as the development of additional statements. This step was done by grouping similar suggestions (nature of the items), by excluding items that were suggested but were not related to the aim of the Delphi (for example methodological aspects) and by discussing content and themes with the research team. Following this step, new statements were added to the Delphi questionnaire and these new statements were reviewed by the lead investigator. To calculate agreement scores, the 7-point Likert scales were converted to a 3-point scale (1-2 = low importance, 3 to 5 = medium importance, and 6-7 = high importance). Agreement scores were then based on the proportion of participants that scored each statement as having low, medium, or high importance. Statements that obtained 75% agreement (meaning that at least 75% of participants agreed on the level of importance) or more were deemed to have achieved consensus and were moved directly into the final list. Participants could not suggest additional statements in the second and third rounds. In all three rounds, an open-ended question was asked to gather the general opinions of experts about statements. The comments were used to improve the clarity of certain statements. We also did a content analysis following the third/final round to classify the items that obtained consensus by theme.

RESULTS

Participant characteristics

A total of 57 participants consented to participate, of which 52 took part in the first round (91.2% participation rate). The characteristics of these participants are indicated in Table 2. Most were women (69.2%) and were from Europe (57.7%) or North America (28.9%). Their ages and field of research varied. Of our sample, 52 completed the second round (100% participation rate), and 44 completed the third round (84.6% participation rate).

[Insert Table 2 Participant characteristics]

Consensus on research priorities on IV toward athletes in sport

The participants achieved consensus on 11 statements in the first round, 7 in the second round, and 31 in the third round, for a total of 49 statements that achieved consensus. Table 3 provides the list of these statements including their level of agreement, mean score, and standard deviation from the round in which they obtained consensus. The mean scores show that participants rated 14 statements as of high importance (mean 6 to 7) and 35 as of medium importance (mean 3 to 5). The first four priorities that reached high consensus rates (78.8% to 80.8%), were scored with high importance (between 6.2 and 6.3 on a scale of 7) and obtained consensus directly following the first round of the Delphi. Those four priorities are: 1) documenting the experiences of children athletes and minors, 2) studying the reporting or disclosure of violence, 3) developing, evaluating, and advising on interventions targeting education and training, and 4) documenting the experiences of violence of para athletes. Meanwhile, the items that reached high consensus (81.1% and 81.2%) but were not scored high in terms of research priority, were a) studying differences and similarities with competition manipulation, doping, and other integrity issues in sport (mean = 4.1/7), and b) studying Esport (mean = 3.6/7). It is also worth mentioning that some items did not reach consensus.

Among those topics that did not reach consensus, but scored medium on importance/priority, were 1) studying societal risk factors, 2) studying cyber-enabled or online violence, 3) studying the grooming process, including emotional and sexual, and 4) studying resilience or protective factors. The complete list of statements, with their mean scores and standard deviations and percent agreement for each round, is provided in Supplementary Material. Also, for statements that reached consensus, we classified them through content analysis in Table 4. Most of the research priorities ($n = 34$, 56.7%) relate to the understanding of the problem, more specifically regarding a) the issues around conceptualisation and the study of specific forms and types of IV in sport, b) the importance of studying specific populations, c) the consequences of IV, d) disclosures, reporting, and complaint mechanisms, and e) links between types of IV, other integrity issues, and IV outside sport.

[Insert Table 3. Statements that obtained consensus]

[Insert Table 4. Statements that obtained consensus classified by theme]

DISCUSSION

The aim of this Delphi study was to identify future research priorities in the field of IV toward athletes as determined by active researchers working in IV in sport. The first four priorities of research described in the result section fit the current state of the scientific literature in the domain of IV in sport. Indeed, much research has focused on adult samples [29] while fewer studies address children and young peoples' experiences or understanding of IV [11] or the inclusion of children and youth in IV research as active actors in the process [30]. This could be explained by the ethical challenges related to conducting research directly with children and young people [31,32]. However, it is recognised that doing research with youth is essential to understanding their realities and to ensuring that interventions fit their needs [31]. Conversely, some research areas

obtained high consensus but were considered as less of a priority. Although the field of IV towards athletes has grown in recent years, attention to Esport and associations between IV and other integrity issues in sport are still lacking. Lower priority given to these research items could potentially be explained by the fact that other integrity issues and Esport did not necessarily fall into the interest/expertise of most participants involved in this study who therefore scored these specific subjects as less important. The rapid growth of the field, however, could potentially lead to changes in this perception, especially as IV has similar risk factors as other integrity issues [21] and more systemic approaches have been recommended to prevent IV and other issues in sport [26]. Alternatively, some items did not even reach consensus. Those results were surprising as published research highlights the importance of better understanding social risk factors such as the norms and culture of sport [24] and *inter alia* online violence in sport [33]. However, it is possible that researchers who participated in our survey thought that even though those subjects were important, others were even more urgent to tackle, such as IV towards children and issues relating to disclosure of IV experiences.

When looking at our content analysis of research priorities, our findings suggest that research is needed to better understand the complexity and diversity of IV in sport in diverse populations (e.g. among victims, survivors as well as perpetrators of IV), and from many disciplinary approaches and contexts. More specifically, we observe that researchers agreed on the need to be more inclusive of the unrepresented groups in research on IV such as children, para athletes, and members of racially/ethnically minoritized groups. In the IOC Consensus Statement on Interpersonal Violence and Safeguarding in Sport [1], it is acknowledged that marginalized populations are underrepresented in the study of IV in sport, including their experiences and the potential unique socio-ecological risk factors that lead to these populations experiencing IV. In addition, documenting the consequences of IV appeared to be of great interest for researchers in the field. However, it seems that current research designs are limited in offering a clear understanding of those ‘consequences’ due to the lack of longitudinal study designs [32]. Considering that ‘consequences’ is a component of the definition of IV [3], it is important to evaluate the outcomes of IV in sport (i.e., personal, relational, organisational and social dimensions). In terms of risk and protective factors, we observe that only items related to risk factors reached consensus. Only two items addressed the importance of documenting protective factors, and they did not reach consensus, namely a) documenting the nature and effects of positive coaching, and b) studying resilience or protective factors against violence. In the violence prevention literature, studying both risk factors and protective factors at all levels of the socio-ecological model is recommended in order to inform prevention strategies [34].

The last theme identified in this Delphi study was the development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions. Despite the fact that most of the items that reached consensus were about understanding the problem, many items also addressed the importance of research on interventions to prevent IV in sport. Indeed, experts seemed to agree that research also needs to address the continuum of prevention of IV against athletes as identified in the violence-prevention literature outside of sport [35,36]. The prevention continuum encompasses a) the promotion of non-violent behaviors (e.g. promotion of positive coaching strategies), b) prevention before occurrence (e.g. training on preventing IV toward athletes), c) the prevention of recurrence (e.g. implementing complaint mechanisms) and d) the prevention of impairment/sequelae or after-effects (e.g. providing psychosocial support to ‘victims’ or ‘survivors’ of IV). Even though many

statements concerning the prevention continuum reached consensus, it is clear that more intervention research is needed at every level of this continuum to best prevent IV toward athletes in sport.

Limitations and future directions

This Delphi study is the first to establish a consensus on the research priorities regarding IV towards athletes in sport as determined by researchers working in this field. This important work will help the research community to better identify research priorities in the field. Furthermore, the response rates of our Delphi (100% and 84.6% respectively for Round 2 and 3, respectively) shows engagement of this community of researchers. The robust response rates also strengthen the richness of the results. Despite the strengths of this study, it also has some limitations that are important to consider. Indeed, as the choice of the items were based on the use of the “Future research” sections of articles used in the literature review process, this could have limited the inclusion of related topics that were less well studied (and published). However, the implemented protocol sought to mitigate this effect by providing participating researchers with the opportunity to suggest additional items. It is also worth noting that many participants found it difficult to score the degree of importance of each item, indicating all items were important to study. The perception of importance or priority could also be shaped by their own theoretical/disciplinary background (in this study most participants had a sport science background), which could be considered both a limitation and a strength given that despite these differences, the group identified common priorities, independent of domains of expertise. Moreover, given the predominance of Westernized researchers involved in our study and the concentration of scientific publications in this region of the world, this is highly possible that our study does not reflect research priorities of other parts of the world such as in the Global South. Another limit is the fact that other participants’ demographic information (race, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) would be important to collect in a future Delphi study.

In terms of future research, it would be interesting to explore consensus in the research community regarding theoretical and methodological limitations and opportunities for IV in sport research field. Also, some participants highlighted the importance of documenting consensus about IV in sport issues (e.g. acceptable and non-acceptable behaviors, prevention strategies) with other actors, such as people who experienced violence in sport, children and young people, coaches, sport managers, safeguarding officers and parents. Including athletes’ perspectives (adult and child) in future Delphi studies on research priorities is recommended to ensure relevance. Moreover, it could be a great addition to future protocols to include more views from Global South and collect more demographic information from participants. Finally, while this study only explored the priorities of research in safe sport, to holistically strengthen safeguarding in policy and practice, a better understanding of the views of policymakers and practitioners is required.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there has been growing interest in the research field of safeguarding athletes from IV in sport in recent years. This Delphi study among researchers identified many promising

avenues for future research to enhance our understanding of this phenomenon but also to more thoroughly evaluate strategies to intervene and prevent such experiences in sport. Given the complexity of IV in sport, collaborative work with sport actors, including those affected by IV, athletes (of all ages), coaches and sport organisations, is crucial to ensure effective and lasting impacts.

Research and policy implications:

- Findings from this study will inform the direction of research in safeguarding athletes from interpersonal violence which will ultimately impact athlete safety, health, and well-being.
- The diversity of the research priority statements identifies the gaps in the scientific base and provides guidance for the development of future research initiatives.
- The Delphi study provides clearly defined research priorities that may also further elucidate gaps in current policies and practices and foci areas for future funding priorities.

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Table 1. Keywords used in the targeted literature review

Included for Interpersonal violence	Included for athlete	Included for sport	Excluded
“violence” OR “abuse” OR “maltreatment” OR “neglect” OR “victim*” OR “safeguarding” OR “harm” OR “bullying” OR “aggression” OR “harassment” OR OR “hazing” OR “prejudice”	“athlete” OR “participant” OR “player” OR “teammate” OR “compe*” OR “youth” OR “teen*”	“sport”	“self” OR “auto” OR “symbolic” OR “institutional” OR “societal” OR “community” OR “intra- familial” OR “transport”

Table 2. Participant characteristics (N=52)

Characteristic		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Woman	36	69.2
	Man	15	28.9
	Non-binary	1	1.9
Age	26-35 years old	11	21.2
	36-45 years old	18	34.6
	46-55 years old	12	23.1
	56-65 years old	7	13.5
	More than 65 years old	4	7.7
Field of research*	Sport sciences	28	53.9
	Psychology	18	34.6
	Pedagogy/Physical education	10	19.2
	Medicine	9	17.3
	Other (sport sociology)	8	15.4
	Public health	7	13.5
	Kinesiology	6	11.5
	Sport Management	6	11.5
	Criminology	4	7.7
	Geographical location	Europe	30
North America		15	28.9
Oceania		3	5.8
Africa		2	3.9
Asia		2	3.9

Note. * Not mutually exclusive

Table 3. Statements that obtained consensus

	Statement	Mean	S.D.	Agree. (%)	Round
1	Documenting the experiences of children athletes or minors	6.3	1.0	80.8	R1
2	Studying the reporting or disclosing of violence (e.g., process, barriers, investigation)	6.3	1.2	78.8	R1
3	Developing, evaluating, and advising on interventions targeting education and training	6.2	1.0	80.8	R1
4	Documenting the experiences of violence in Para athletes	6.2	1.1	78.8	R1
5	Studying relational risk factors (e.g. factors related to proximal social relationships such as level of closeness, coaching style, coaching negative rapport)	6.2	1.0	76.9	R1
6	Developing, evaluating, and advising on procedures to support victims* and survivors* of violence	6.1	0.7	82.7	R2
7	Studying emotional violence, including subtle forms	6.1	0.9	76.9	R1
8	Studying sexual abuse against boys or males	6.1	1.2	76.9	R1
9	Developing, evaluating, and advising on interventions targeting a change of culture	6.1	1.0	76.9	R1
10	Documenting coaches' perspective regarding interpersonal violence (e.g., coaching culture, knowledge, attitudes)	6.1	1.2	75.0	R1
11	Studying consequences related to health and well-being of athletes/victims	6.1	1.1	75.0	R1
12	Focusing efforts on primary prevention that address the root cause of interpersonal violence in sport.	6.0	0.9	82.7	R2
13	Engaging athlete voices in research, including young athletes.	6.0	1.0	77.3	R3
14	Studying community risk factors (e.g., factors related to the community context such as sport organizations' policies, recruiting, management practices)	6.0	0.9	76.9	R1
15	Studying normalization of violence in sport (e.g., process, manifestations, why some coaches do not see abusive practices as violence).	5.8	1.0	79.5	R3
16	Studying bullying or peer-to-peer violence.	5.8	0.7	77.3	R3
17	Studying coping or healing from violence in sport.	5.8	0.7	77.3	R3
18	Documenting the experiences of violence in athletes who face prejudice based on race and ethnicity.	5.8	1.0	75.0	R3
19	Documenting the consequences of violence on sport participation, performance, and drop out of athletes/victims.	5.8	0.9	75.0	R3
20	Studying neglect.	5.2	0.7	77.3	R3
21	Documenting the relations between forms of violence (e.g., does psychological violence lead to more sexual violence).	5.1	0.9	77.3	R3
22	Theorizing consent and sexual relations between athletes and coaches.	5.1	0.9	77.3	R3

Table 3. Statements that obtained consensus

	Statement	Mean	S.D.	Agree. (%)	Round
23	Documenting the parents' perspective regarding violence (e.g., socialization process in sport, attitudes, behaviors).	5.1	0.9	75.0	R3
24	Understanding the influence of trusting relationships on recognition and disclosure of violence (e.g., parents or athletes overly trusting coaches or organizations).	5.0	0.8	84.1	R3
25	Documenting the experiences of athletes from different levels or contexts of competition (e.g., local vs international, elite, non-elite, student athletes)	4.9	1.1	75.0	R2
26	Studying individual risk factors for athletes/potential victims (e.g., biological and personal factors such as age, gender, type of sport).	4.9	0.9	84.1	R3
27	Studying instrumental violence in sport.	4.9	1.0	77.3	R3
28	Studying interpersonal violence perpetrated by a parent.	4.8	0.8	90.9	R3
29	Understanding the intersection between law and safeguarding policies in sport (e.g., how sport clubs manage criminal record checks, how to share data about stakeholders who break ethical codes).	4.8	0.9	84.1	R3
30	Understanding international sport federations/IOC relationships in influencing safeguarding issues.	4.8	1.1	79.5	R3
31	Promoting discussion about definitions of interpersonal violence and their use in research.	4.8	0.9	79.5	R3
32	Understanding the relation between perspectives of different stakeholders on interpersonal violence (e.g., between coaches, athletes and athletes' parents)	4.8	1.0	76.9	R2
33	Documenting the consequences of violence on organizations.	4.7	1.0	79.5	R3
34	Understanding barriers to the professionalization of coaching and the benefits of professionalizing the coaching profession for the protection of all stakeholders in sport.	4.7	1.1	79.1	R3
35	Studying perpetrators' characteristics.	4.7	1.2	77.3	R3
36	Studying female-perpetrated sexual violence	4.7	1.1	75.0	R2
37	Studying restorative justice (e.g., process, effectiveness, policies).	4.6	1.1	86.4	R3
38	Documenting the consequences of violence on the family and community.	4.6	1.0	86.4	R3
39	Documenting the consequences of violence on sport at large.	4.6	1.1	79.5	R3
40	Studying the comparison between violence in sport and in other domains (e.g., differences and similarities with IV in school, at work)	4.6	1.2	75.0	R2
41	Studying the concept of over conformity to the sport ethic (social norms in sport related to athletes' work ethic).	4.5	0.9	93.2	R3
42	Documenting the consequences of fear of false allegation on coaching practices.	4.5	1.0	86.4	R3
43	Studying microaggressions.	4.5	1.2	81.8	R3

Table 3. Statements that obtained consensus

	Statement	Mean	S.D.	Agree. (%)	Round
44	Documenting government policies on general interpersonal violence.	4.4	1.1	84.1	R3
45	Theorizing "independence" in governance of safeguarding issues in sport.	4.4	1.2	81.8	R3
46	Documenting consequences of short- and long- term exposure to interpersonal violence on physiology and neurobiology of athletes	4.2	1.3	78.8	R2
47	Addressing violence within sports competitions (e.g., on-field or on-court physical altercations outside the rules of play) as criminal violence.	4.1	1.1	86.4	R3
48	Studying differences and similarities with competition manipulation, doping, and other integrity issues in sport.	4.1	1.0	81.8	R3
49	Studying Esport.	3.6	1.1	81.2	R3

Note. Agree. = Level of agreement; S. D. = standard deviation; Round = round where the statement obtained consensus and was removed from further rounds.

* We acknowledge that individuals with lived experience of IV may have different preferences with regards to how they identify, and the terminologies herein may only reflect those of some, not all.

Table 4. Statements that obtained consensus classified by themes

Themes and corresponding items	<i>n</i>	%
UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM	34	56.7
Conceptualization and specific types and forms of IV Studying emotional violence, including subtle forms Studying bullying or peer-to-peer violence Studying neglect Theorizing consent and sexual relations between athletes and coaches. Studying instrumental violence in sport Studying interpersonal violence perpetrated by a parent. Promoting discussion about definitions of interpersonal violence and their use in research Studying the concept of over conformity to the sport ethic (social norms in sport related to athletes' work ethic). Studying microaggressions Theorizing "independence" in governance of safeguarding issues in sport Addressing violence within sports competitions (e.g., on-field or on-court physical altercations outside the rules of play) as criminal violence Studying Esport	12	20.0
IV and specific populations Documenting the experiences of children athletes or minors Documenting the experiences of violence in Para athletes Studying sexual abuse against boys or males Documenting coaches' perspective regarding interpersonal violence (e.g., coaching culture, knowledge, attitudes) Documenting the experiences of violence in athletes who face prejudice based on race and ethnicity Documenting the parents' perspective regarding violence (e.g., socialization process in sport, attitudes, behaviors). Documenting the experiences of athletes from different levels or contexts of competition (e.g., local vs international, elite, non-elite, student athletes) Understanding the relation between perspectives of different stakeholders on interpersonal violence (e.g., between coaches, athletes and athletes' parents) Studying perpetrators' characteristics Studying female-perpetrated sexual violence	10	16.7
Consequences of IV Studying consequences related to health and well-being of athletes/victims Documenting the consequences of violence on sport participation, performance, and drop out of athletes/victims	7	11.7

Documenting the consequences of violence on organizations		
Documenting the consequences of violence on the family and community		
Documenting the consequences of violence on sport at large		
Documenting the consequences of fear of false allegation on coaching practices.		
Documenting consequences of short- and long- term exposure to interpersonal violence on physiology and neurobiology of athletes		
Disclosure, reporting, and complaint mechanisms	2	3.3
Studying the reporting or disclosing of violence (e.g., process, barriers, investigation)		
Understanding the influence of trusting relationships on recognition and disclosure of violence (e.g., parents or athletes overly trusting coaches or organizations).		
Links between types of IV, other integrity issues, and IV outside sport	3	5
Documenting the relations between forms of violence (e.g., does psychological violence lead to more sexual violence).		
Studying the comparison between violence in sport and in other domains (e.g., differences and similarities with IV in school, at work)		
Studying differences and similarities with competition manipulation, doping, and other integrity issues in sport.		
IDENTIFYING RISK FACTORS	4	6.7
Studying relational risk factors (e.g. factors related to proximal social relationships such as level of closeness, coaching style, coaching negative rapport)		
Studying community risk factors (e.g., factors related to the community context such as sport organizations' policies, recruiting, management practices)		
Studying normalization of violence in sport (e.g., process, manifestations, why some coaches do not see abusive practices as violence).		
Studying individual risk factors for athletes/potential victims (e.g., biological and personal factors such as age, gender, type of sport).		
DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF INTERVENTIONS	10	16.7
Developing, evaluating, and advising on interventions targeting education and training		
Developing, evaluating, and advising on interventions targeting a change of culture		
Focusing efforts on primary prevention that address the root cause of interpersonal violence in sport		
Understanding barriers to the professionalization of coaching and the benefits of professionalizing the coaching profession for the protection of all stakeholders in sport.		
Documenting government policies on general interpersonal violence		

<p>Developing, evaluating, and advising on procedures to support victims and survivors of violence</p> <p>Studying coping or healing from violence in sport</p> <p>Understanding the intersection between law and safeguarding policies in sport (e.g., how sport clubs manage criminal record checks, how to share data about stakeholders who break ethical codes).</p> <p>Understanding international sport federations/IOC relationships in influencing safeguarding issues.</p> <p>Studying restorative justice (e.g., process, effectiveness, policies).</p>		
GENERAL	1	1.7
Engaging athlete voices in research, including young athletes.		