Monitoring and Evaluation Prevention Practices of SHA in sport: Sexual Harassment Policy NOC*NSF

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A short introduction

• 1996 was a crucial year: 3 athletes announced that they had been sexually abused by their coach

• NOC*NSF initiated the development of a prevention policy on Sexual Harassment and Abuse (SHA) for her sport organisations.

• First study on SHA: All risk factors were studied (Cense, 1997) – explanatory model on risk factors
  
  • Key findings: risk factors were the coach – the sport situation – the athlete
Policy Development

• Based on the explanatory model on risk factors, starting points were formulated for prevention. Within the sport-specific context most of the prevention policy was focused on the risk *sports situation*.

• One of the first steps was to develop a code of *conduct* for all trainers and coaches in sports and it was discussed with more than a hundred representatives of Dutch sports organizations. The final code as accepted by acclamation (1998)
Development of policy instruments

Repressive instruments – how to deal with an incident

• The organization of a pool of counsellors and advisors for victims, supposed perpetrator and other stakeholders. Activities focused on repressive activities and coping with actual incidents.
Development of policy instruments

Repressive instruments – how to deal with an incident

• A special (emergency) helpline, open to callers 24/7. Help is assured in less than twelve hours. It also serves as a first aid in case of an immediate crisis.

See presentation Maarten Borneman & Tine Vertommen
(Symposium IV tomorrow)
Development of policy instruments

Repressive instruments

- Official format on how to deal with official complaints and execute disciplinary sanctions
- Since 2006, an disciplinary institute for sport law handles complaints (Sports court of arbitration, doping and sexual harassment)
Development of policy instruments

Repressive instruments

- Since 2012 a registration system for sexual offenders in sports is implemented
- And a VOG = Verklaring Omtrent Gedrag (Criminal Record Check)
Development of policy instruments

Preventive instruments

Tools to stimulate communication about the problem:

- Handouts for different target groups
- Documentary (story telling)
- Special website
- Information Flyers
- Guided discussion sessions
Development of policy instruments

*Preventive instruments*

Tools to implement the prevention plan:

- Audit for sports federations
- Incorporating sexual harassment in sports into the education of trainers and coaches
- E-learning sexual harassment
- Since 2012: A tool kit “in safe hands” - [www.inveiligehanden.nl](http://www.inveiligehanden.nl)
Research

Incidence and prevalence

• 1997: During Cense’s study it remained unclear how big the problem of SHA was in the Netherlands.
• 2005: NOC*NSF tried for the first time to get data on the nature and extent of SHA in sports. The response to this quantitative study (N=2000) was very low (11%), so it was not possible to draw any conclusions.
Research

Incidence and prevalence

- 2009-2011: NOC*NSF has a database with over ten years of reports on incidents. These incidents were reported to the Helpline and were analyzed.

Results: - top of the iceberg!

See presentation Maarten Borneman & Tine Vertommen
(Symposium IV tomorrow)
Research

Evaluation of policy instruments

2011: Research into the usability and effectiveness of policy instruments on sexual harassment (MOVISIE - Serkei et. al., 2012). Methode: survey - N=382 sport clubs
Research

Evaluation of policy instruments

Results:

• Only 16% of clubs have developed a preventive policy on SHA
• Clubs don’t know that they can ask for support on this topic or with actual incidents
• 75% of clubs are not aware of the existence of policy instruments
Research

Evaluation of policy instruments

Results:

• The clubs that use the instruments are very positive!
• Best known and used instruments are:
  • code of conduct
  • pool of counsellors
Research

Evaluation of policy instruments

Still anno 2011: *club directors (board members) are skeptic to raise the subject, they are afraid that it will give the impression ‘that something is going on in their club’*

**Main problem:** clubs do not feel the urge to have a policy on SHA
2012 – 2016
A safe sports environment

SHA policy is now part of a bigger approach in the Netherlands – **A Safe Sports Environment**, introduced by the Dutch minister of Health, Welfare and Sports.
2012 – 2016

A safe sports environment

Aim of this program is to create a more safe sports environment for everyone. Both preventive measures and repressive measures are integrated in one program. Besides this the program has a wide range which reaches from

(1) awareness and communication,
(2) sports clubs and board members,
(3) trainers and coaches,
(4) arbitrary executives (referees) and
(5) excesses and disciplinary laws
Descriptive analysis of the NOC*NSF helpline for SHA in sport 2001-2010
Relevance

1. Remarkable lack of data on actual incidents

2. Developed NOC*NSF SHA prevention policy never complemented or evaluated by scientific research before (incident-initiated after 1996)

3. Unique setting: the first helpline for SHA in sport worldwide
Problems...

- Established to serve as a *policy* instrument, not a scientific tool
  - Archiving

- Registration by counsellors:
  - Non-conformity on SHA definitions
  - Preset Incident Registration Forms
  - Registration attitude
    - *Subjectivity*
    - *Difficult to change*
    - *Persuading counsellors of the importance of careful registration, cf.scientific value*

- No information on the incidence/prevalence
  - *Top of the iceberg !?*
Reports: when, how and who?

- 70% on current or recent incidents
- 70% through helpline
- Reporter
  - Local club board: 33%
  - Victim: 21%
  - Alleged perpetrator: 20%
  - Federation/union: 9%
  - Parents: 8%
  - Peer athletes: 0.8%

- Referral to general mental health services: 6%
### Outcome of the counsellors’ interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal procedure</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint within federation</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charges police/justice</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of federation and justice</td>
<td>8%</td>
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### Final outcome of the incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal settlement</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No solution</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conviction in court</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension by federation</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharged (federation or court)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False accusation</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>43%</td>
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Recommendations NOC*NSF project

• Improvement registration attitude!
• Attention to correlation with non-sexual harassment
• Based on results of effectiveness study (only 8% sport participants is familiar with the helpline):
  proactive and repeated communication to target audience
  ? More young athletes? Use other ways of communication? Online chat function?
Scientific recommendation

• Same question remains: what is the prevalence of SHA in Dutch sports?

• Quantitative study into prevalence (2012-2014)
  – 5000 respondents: 2500 Dutch athletes and 2500 Flemish athletes
  – Childhood emotional, physical and sexual abuse in sport
  – Impact on mental health and wellbeing later on
  – Focus on violence in asymmetrical coach-athlete relationship, but also on peer-to-peer violence

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QUESTIONS?

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