

Adjustment to Retirement of Horse Racing Jockeys

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Declaration

“I, Daniel Lynch, declare that the Master by Research thesis entitled, Adjustment to Retirement of Horse Racing Jockeys, is no more than 60,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work”.

Signature

Date

Abstract

Retirement from sport can be a problematic and traumatic experience for athletes. Retirement from professional horse racing can be particularly distressful for jockeys. This thesis describes how former professional jockeys' adjusted to retirement. The participants in the present study were 72 retired jockeys, who had been retired between one and forty-one years. Retired jockeys were examined in relation to physical, mental, and social adjustment to retirement. Adjustment was also assessed for the different forms of retirement, namely, voluntary and involuntary retirement. Adjustment to retirement of involuntarily retired jockeys was also examined according to length of retirement, that is, less than 10 years, between 10 and 20 years, and greater than 20 years. Adjustment to retirement was measured using the Retired Jockeys Questionnaire (Speed et al., 2001). Descriptive analysis indicated that retired jockeys experienced physical health problems (e.g., back, hip, arthritis), and mental problems (e.g., forming an identity outside the racing industry, emotional distress). In addition, jockeys experienced social problems (e.g., losing contact with friends within the racing industry, maintaining a social life within the racing industry). Inferential analysis was used to identify differences between the retirement experiences of voluntarily and involuntarily retired jockeys. In all cases, jockeys who retired involuntarily reported more health problems than jockeys who retired voluntarily. Specifically, differences between voluntary and involuntary retirees were found for arthritis, $F(1, 71) = -4.59, p < .001, d = 1.39$, osteoporosis, $F(1, 71) = -3.74, p < .001, d = .82$, immune system, $F(1, 71) = -3.73, p < .001, d = .79$, and kidney problems, $F(1, 71) = -3.62, p < .001, d = 0.77$. Involuntary retirement was associated with a higher reported level of problems

universally. Differences between the voluntary and involuntary retirees were also found for mental health issues, specifically for, identity difficulties leaving the racing industry, $F(1, 71) = -2.99, p < .004, d = 1.22$, and identity opportunities, $F(1, 71) = -2.31, p < .024, d = 0.94$. Jockeys who retired involuntarily also experienced greater problems with social issues. There was a significant difference between voluntary and involuntary retirees for social support from friends, $F(1, 71) = -1.95, p < .001, d = 0.78$, social support from family, $F(1, 71) = -1.85, p < .001, d = 0.74$, social support from other jockeys $F(1, 71) = -2.57, p < .001, d = 1.04$, social support from the racing industry $F(1, 71) = -3.68, p < .001, d = 1.50$, social isolation $F(1, 71) = -2.32, p < .001, d = 0.93$, and social difficulties with old racing friends $F(1, 58) = -2.26, p < .030, d = 0.91$.

Differences were found between the three groups of involuntarily retired jockeys, for joint problems, $F(1, 58) = 2.70, p < .08, R^2 = .081$, and back problems, $F(1, 58) = 1.20, p = .30, R^2 = .039$, showing that those jockeys retired for less than 10 years and those retired more than 20 years reported more problems than those jockeys who had been retired for between 10 and 20 years. There were differences for mental health issues between the three involuntarily retired groups, particularly for those jockeys who had been retired for between 10 and 20 years, who experienced more problems with identity after leaving the racing industry, than those jockeys retired for less than 10 years or greater than 20 years. There were differences between the three retirement groups with respect to social issues, specifically family relationship difficulties, $F(1, 58) = 2.90, p < .06, R^2 = .089$, whereby those jockeys who had been retired for less than 10 years reported experiencing more problems. The results indicate that the type of retirement experience, voluntary or involuntary and the length of involuntary retirement had an influence on the adjustment to retirement for jockeys. Implications for professional and

applied work in the area of career termination are discussed, and suggestions are made regarding future research on career transitions from sport.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Athletic participation comprises many powerful and lasting experiences. Perhaps the most unique and inevitable experience is retirement from sport. Although transition into retirement may be predictable or unpredictable, individual differences exist in sport retirement and retirement from elite sport can be a traumatic and negative event (McPherson, 1980; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004), or an experience of social rebirth (Coakley, 1983).

Horse racing is an immensely popular and exciting sport, however, it is different to many other sports in noteworthy ways. Unlike many other sports, horse racing is culturally diverse. Horse racing is an international, multi-billion dollar industry, that takes place over a 12-month season, on all weather tracks, and is accessible to all classes of people within society (Turner, McCrory, & Halley, 2002). Furthermore, the life of the horse racing athlete, the jockey, is also unusual, even by elite sport standards. Meeting weight requirements, full time physical, mental, and social commitments to daily training/track work and racing, a 12-month season, and high injury rates equate to horse racing being a unique and demanding sport for jockeys (Turner, McCrory & Halley). Retirement from riding may be a stressful event characterised by limited employment opportunities, financial hardship, poor physical health, and emotional distress (Speed, Seedsman, & Morris, 2001). Heavy involvement in racing from an early age, meeting the stringent demands of riding, isolation from many facets of society, and lack of opportunity to establish support links or resources to help in retirement, the transition experience of retirement from riding may be even more exaggerated than 'typical' retirement from elite sport.

Retirement from elite sport generally is associated with adjustment problems (Grove, Lavalley, & Gordon, 1997; Lavalley & Wylleman, 2000). These problems may cause distress manifesting itself physically, mentally, or socially (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). Few studies, however, have focused on the adjustment to retirement for jockeys. Several authors (Lippincott-Williams & Williams, 2001; Speed, Seedsman, & Morris, 2001; Turner, et al., 2002) have suggested that retirement from riding is often problematic. Consequently, there is a need for further study of the impact of retirement of horse racing jockeys.

The type of retirement context needs to be taken into account in order to understand the entire retirement experience of the athlete (Wylleman & Lavalley, 2004). The adjustment experiences of athletes following retirement may depend on the type and consequences of retirement from sport, namely voluntary retirement (e.g., free choice) or involuntary retirement (e.g., injury, illness, or deselection). Researchers in other sports suggest that the adjustment process depends on several causal factors, including the type of retirement, voluntary or involuntary (Avery & Jablin, 1998; Baillie, 2002; Fortunato, Anderson, Morris, & Seedsman, 1995; Gordon, 1995; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). Hence, there is a need to examine the effects of voluntary and involuntary retirement on retirement from riding for horse racing jockeys.

The effects of retirement may be long lasting, depending on the developmental level, or stage of the athlete (Wylleman & Lavalley, 2004). It might be expected that the longer a jockey is retired, the better the adjustment. There are, however, no studies of retirement from riding that have examined the effects retirement has on jockeys over extended periods (Lippincott-Williams & Williams, 2001; Speed, Seedsman, & Morris, 2001; Turner, McCrory, & Halley, 2002). Furthermore, studies that examine adjustment

to retirement over time from other sports are limited (Kleiber & Brock, 1992; Kleiber, Greendorfer, Blinde, & Samdahl, 1987). Consequently, it would be valuable to examine the effects of length of retirement on levels of adjustment and difficulties experienced in retirement from riding.

Termination from sport involves a variety of unique experiences that sets it apart from workforce retirement. The culture associated with some sports, like horse racing, sets them apart as even more intense environments in which to live and work, and from which to retire. The purpose of this thesis was to examine retirement experiences, especially adjustment to retirement for jockeys. A further purpose was to examine the effect of voluntary and involuntary retirement on adjustment to retirement, and, to examine the effect of length of retirement on adjustment experienced during retirement.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I examine definitions of retirement from sport and then consider a number of theories of retirement from sport. Next, I discuss research on retirement from sport, including general retirement from sport, voluntary and involuntary retirement, duration of retirement, and, jockey specific retirement research.

Definitions of Retirement

Retirement has been identified as a significantly stressful event and generally conceptualized as a major life crisis (Lo & Brown, 1999). A broad definition of retirement was proposed by Bond (1976) as “any ‘stepping down’ from an occupation, even if an individual moves to another type of work” (p. 272). According to Agarwal (1998), retirement is clearly one of the most important social factors in ageing. Retirement affects the way elders spend their time, their income, social interaction, and can affect physical and mental health, self-esteem, and life satisfaction (Agarwal, 1998).

As in the general workforce, sport involvement also represents a vocation, because the role often reflects a serious commitment and pre-occupation for ten years or more duration (Webb, Nasco, Riley, & Headrick, 1998). The longevity of athletic careers can vary from sport to sport, but all athletes face the inevitability of career termination (Webb et al., 1998). According to Ogilvie and Taylor (1993), retirement from sport is also similar to retirement from the workforce, because it can be conceptualised as a complex interaction of stressors, including financial, social, psychological, and physical stressors that may produce cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and/or social trauma. Retirement may also be voluntary or involuntary.

According to Chow (2001), “retirement from sport is the event which marks some period of life between elite sports competition and the life into which a former athlete settles” (p. 3).

Retirement from the workforce may be classified as either voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary retirement occurs when individuals decide to and actually stop work of their own free will (Lowe, 1991). According to Agarwal (1998), a substantial proportion of older adults retiring from the workforce in this category, look forward to, make plans for, and enjoy retirement. Involuntary retirement from the workforce is brought on by circumstances beyond the control of the individual (Lowe, 1991). Inability to adapt to new employment conditions, statutory retirement age and chronic ill-health, are examples of involuntary retirement from the workforce. Similarly, causes for termination of an athletic career are often labelled as voluntary and involuntary (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). Athletes who freely choose to end their career are considered voluntary retirees (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). Age, deselection, and injury, however, are common causes of involuntary retirement for athletes.

In a study of workforce retirees, Roadburg (1985) found that voluntary retirees were more likely to be satisfied than forced retirees. According to Taylor and Ogilvie (2001), whatever the cause of retirement in sport, each individual faces a period of adjustment during the transition from athlete to ex-athlete. In fact, many researchers have found that regardless of the type of retirement, athletes do experience difficulty in the sports retirement process (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993, Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Pearson & Petitas, 1990). Sinclair and Orlick (1993) proposed that every career termination has the potential to be a crisis, relief, or combination of both, depending on the athlete’s perception of the situation. In support of this position, Taylor and Ogilvie

suggested that retirement may lead to growth and development or to isolation and decline.

The prevention of career termination crises may begin in the early stages of athletic development. Successful retirements require preparation and planning, including a definite date when an individual may expect to alter their way of life, according to a plan. The advantage of workforce retirement in many ways is that, generally workers have known the approximate date of retirement and, therefore, have sufficient time to prepare for the event. According to Agarwal (1998), for workforce retirement to be successful, there is a need for individuals to develop interests outside their regular job, that contribute to personality development, physical well-being, and the cultivation of personal aspirations. Social and educational, as well as economic, pressures have been brought to bear on individuals to help them prepare for retirement. Now that developed nations are removing statutory retirement and encouraging people to work longer to help cope with an ageing population, it will be interesting to see whether workforce retirement problems increase or decrease.

A significant contributor to the reaction of athletes to career termination is the lack of pre-retirement planning. Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) suggested that athletic pre-retirement planning may not occur for many athletes and that retirement may, thus, be involuntary. Research indicates that 14-32% of athletes have their careers prematurely ended because of injury (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Hare, 1971; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). According to Mihovilovic (1968), athletic performance will decrease and retirement is inevitable due to the natural physical deterioration that accompanies middle age. The age at which this typically occurs will vary from sport to sport, depending on the characteristics of the activity. Retirement

from sport may also limit opportunities the athlete has to develop diverse self and social identities and impede their access to social support (Rees & Hardy, 2000; Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). Further, Gorbett (1985) noted that retirement means the inevitable loss of a collaborative approbation. The loss of collective recognition and praise from family, teammates, other athletes, and society at large is a loss that many athletes feel is unlikely to ever be reclaimed in other, less visible, arenas.

The reasons for retirement from sport are many and they seem to play a crucial role in the adjustment to post-career life. Ogilvie and Taylor (1993) described sport retirement as a complex interaction of stressors, that include financial, social, psychological, and physical stressors that may produce some form of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and/or social trauma. These stressors may be voluntary or involuntary, and are fundamental issues that are pertinent to retirement from sport. I will use Ogilvie and Taylor's definition of sport retirement in this thesis because in this study I am examining the interaction of physical, social, and emotional stressors on retired athletes.

Theories of Retirement

A range of theories and models of retirement have been applied in athlete retirement research in order to understand the retirement process. Sport theoreticians have identified similarities between the processes of retirement from sport and social gerontological models of aging, thanatological models of death and dying, and models of human adaptation to transition.

Gerontology

Gerontology has been defined as the systematic analysis of the ageing process (Atchley, 1991). Gerontology is used to look at aging from two points of view: how aging affects the individual and how an aging population will change society (Novak, 1988). Gerontology, when related to retirement from sport, considers life satisfaction following retirement as being dependent on how characteristics of the sport experience impact on the individual and how the process affects the sporting society (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1994). Some sport psychologists (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985) have suggested that a number of social gerontological approaches are appropriate to the study of retirement from sports including disengagement theory, activity theory, continuity theory, and social breakdown theory.

Disengagement Theory

In disengagement theory, Cummings, Dean, Newell, and McCaffrey (1960) suggested that retirement should be viewed as a necessary manifestation of the mutual withdrawal from society of individuals in the ageing population and by society from those who retire. Cummings et al. (1960) proposed that this withdrawal is universal, as well as inevitable. According to this perspective, those who accept the withdrawal process will successfully adapt to aging, whereas those who do not engage with the withdrawal process will find it difficult to adapt to old age. Second, disengagement is good for society, because it can gradually transfer the functions previously performed by the aged to the young. Thus, society avoids the problems caused by increasing incompetence or sudden death of the aged and the elderly can enjoy their remaining years in leisure. Both concepts involved in the disengagement theory, the withdrawal

process and the transfer of roles from retirees to younger workers can be applied to retirement from sport. First, during the withdrawal process, it has been proposed that athletes, who accept the inevitability of retirement, often adapt successfully to retirement, whereas those who do not disengage or accept the withdrawal process experience a difficult time coping with retirement (Ogilvie, 1982). Second, the transfer of roles from older to the younger people can be applied to sport, whereby younger athletes are given an opportunity to perform in place of older, retired athletes. From the team's perspective, this could enhance overall performance, just as society benefits from fresh young workers.

According to Gordon and Lavalley (2001), disengagement theory is limited in an application sense, because it does not provide the mechanisms to predict whether disengagement will occur. Blinde and Greendorfer (1985), stated that disengagement theory offers little to the understanding of retirement from competitive sport. In support of this, Lerch (1981) demonstrated that a large number of athletes try to hang onto their sport, and that mutual withdrawal of athletes and the sport structure typically does not occur.

Activity Theory

According to Havighurst (1963), activity theory is the direct opposite of the disengagement theory. Activity theory states that disengagement is not inevitable, except shortly before death. Furthermore, Havighurst and other activity theorists (Burgess, 1960) argued that activity, rather than disengagement is good for the individual and society and that high activity and maintenance of roles are positively related to self-concept and high satisfaction. Similarly, in terms of athletic career termination,

McPherson (1980) proposed that for the adjustment process to be successful, active roles that are lost upon retirement must be exchanged for new ones. According to Lavalley (2001), activity theory may not apply universally to athletic career termination, because there is usually neither a cessation of work activity, nor total retirement from participation. Further, Baillie and Danish (1992) suggested that an athlete's activity patterns cannot be directly compared to society's normal activity patterns.

Continuity Theory

Proposed by Atchley (1976), continuity theory is neither clearly different from disengagement or activity theory. Continuity theory allows change to be integrated without necessarily causing disequilibrium. Atchley proposed that the best adjusted individuals are those who experience minimal change and greater continuity following retirement from the workforce.

In terms of athletic career retirement, it has been proposed that continuity theory can also predict the level of adjustment to retirement by examining the significance of sport in the lives of athletes (Lerch, 1981). In the application of continuity theory to retirement from sport, if one's athletic role is seen as more meaningful than other life roles, the athlete may need to continue in a sport-related role (e.g. coach, commentator, administrator). If the athlete stays connected to sports, and income remains relatively stable after retirement, the level of subjective and behavioural commitment to sport is maintained (Wylleman, 2001). In a study of professional basketball players, Lerch (1981) found, however, that no continuity variables were significantly related to adjustment to retirement from sport.

Social Breakdown Theory

Developed by Kuypers and Bengston (1973), social breakdown theory is based on the view that with any role loss (e.g., retirement), individuals become susceptible to external labelling and tendencies to withdraw from activities develop. In relation to sport, Rosenberg (1981) suggested that external labeling and withdrawal may lead the athlete to withdraw further from their sport and internalise negative evaluation, so the individual may lose social ties, suffer displacement, or experience anxiety. Rosenberg (1981) suggested that social breakdown theory is perhaps the most salient social gerontological theory. Furthermore, Gordon (1995) stated that the application of social breakdown theory can help minimise the potential for social breakdowns and smooth out the transition period through a “social reconstruction”. According to Gordon and Lavalée, “social reconstruction” is proposed to restore and maintain positive self-image through counselling and engagement in alternative activities that enhance self-reliance.

Social gerontological theories have been criticised as inadequate when applied to athletic retirement (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Rotella & Heyman, 1993). There is often the assumption that athletes are forced to disengage from their sport, when there are many athletes who retire voluntarily (Werthner & Orlick, 1986). There is also the presumption that the career transition process is an inherently negative event, requiring considerable adjustment for all who experience retirement (Coakley, 1983). According to Allison and Meyer (1988) and Coakley (1983), however, some sport retirees view athletic retirement as opportunistic and liberating. Greendorfer and Blinde (1985) suggested that this is particularly true for those who have undertaken anticipatory forms

of socialisation that facilitate movement into new roles (e.g., reprioritising of interests, developing of alternative skills).

Thanatology

Thanatology is the study of the processes of death and dying (Aiken, 2001). According to Lerch (1982), thanatology refers to a form of social withdrawal and rejection from an individual's primary affiliation group. Two social thanatological theories, namely, Awareness Context and Stages of Dying are often applied to the study of retirement.

Awareness Context

Glaser and Strauss (1965) suggested that, in society, there are observable and predictable patterns of interaction between dying persons and those interacting with them (e.g., family members and medical staff). As these individuals interact over time, it is suggested that four awareness contexts develop: closed awareness, suspected awareness, mutual pretense, and open awareness (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1994).

According to Glaser and Strauss (1965), closed awareness relates to the actions of relatives and medical staff, who find it difficult to discuss death with dying persons. In this level of awareness, medical staff and relatives do not inform the dying person they are dying. Somewhat higher on the awareness scale is suspected awareness whereby patients suspect that they are dying and may even try to trick the medical staff or family members into admitting it (Puner, 1974). The next step on the awareness scale is, mutual pretense, which occurs when both the patient and significant others know that the former is dying, but act as if it were not so. Finally, there is open awareness. Open

awareness occurs when all actors in the drama of death openly acknowledge that the patient is dying (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). Glaser and Strauss suggested that most dying people appreciate being told the truth, welcome an opportunity to discuss dying and death with an understanding and sympathetic person, and are grateful that this process allows them to prepare for death.

The concept of social death has often been paralleled to the retirement experiences of athletes (Rosenberg, 1982; Lerch, 1984). Lavalley (2001) suggested that social death may accompany athletic retirement with a loss of social functioning, isolation, and ostracism. In sport, the closed awareness category relates to the elite athlete being unaware of management's plan to release or deselect them. An often surprised or shocked athlete does not have the opportunity to discuss the inevitability of death (as an athlete) and little chance to make future plans (Gordon, 1995; Lavalley, 2001). A suspected awareness context exists, when the athlete suspects that the transition processes or retirement is imminent and the nonverbal communication they receive from coaching and administration staff confirms this, but those around the athlete do not explicitly discuss retirement with the athlete (Gordon, 1995). Mutual pretense exists when the athlete, coach, teammates, and administration staff, are all aware of the upcoming retirement of an athlete, but do not discuss the individual's career termination. It is possible in this case, that isolation and loneliness may occur (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). Finally, open awareness occurs when all people openly acknowledge that the athlete's career is ending. The athlete may have difficulty in accepting the knowledge of their impending career termination (Gordon, 1995), but open awareness may give the athlete an opportunity to plan their post-athletic career (Lavalley, 2001).

The awareness context theory has been criticised as being inadequate when applied to retirement from sport (Gordon, 1995; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998). This theory has also been criticised on the basis that it was developed with non-sport populations (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985), and based on the generalizability of the claim that it happens to the vast majority of athletes (Taylor & Ogilvie), as well as its limited perspective for not focussing on the life-span development of athletes (Lavalley & Wylleman, 2004). In addition, awareness context theory lacks operational detail to the specific components related to the career transition and termination adjustment process (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998).

Stages of Dying

Kübler-Ross's (1969) stage theory was formulated from an analysis of her interviews with over 200 dying patients. She argued that it is important for medical staff and families of dying patients to be observant and aware of these progressive stages, because the psychological needs of patients and the appropriate responses to them vary somewhat from stage to stage.

The first stage in Kübler-Ross's (1969), model is denial. Denial is an important self-protective mechanism, in that it enables people to keep from being overwhelmed or rendered helpless by the frightening and depressing events of life and to direct their attention to more rewarding experiences (Aiken, 2001). Denial of death is manifested in many ways. For example, patients, who have been told clearly and explicitly that they have a heart disorder, cancer, or some other serious illness, may deny having been told anything. Denial of death is, not limited to dying patients, and is also quite common among medical staff and among the family and friends of dying patients.

As the dying process continues, denial gradually fades into partial acceptance of death. Kubler-Ross (1969) proposed that partial acceptance is accompanied by feelings of anger at the unfairness of having to die without being given a chance to do all that one wants to do, especially when so many less worthy people will continue to live. The feelings of anger experienced by a dying person are frequently non-discriminating, being directed at family, friends, and medical staff. The direct target of the patient's anger, however, is the unfairness of death, rather than other people.

In the normal course of events, a dying patient's anger fades and is replaced by a desperate attempt to buy time to postpone death. Kubler-Ross (1969) called this the bargaining stage, in which the person bargains with medical staff, God, or any other entity that they believe might influence the process. A dying person may promise to take their medicine, pray for forgiveness, embrace new religious beliefs, or engage in rituals or magical acts to ward off death. The fourth stage in Kübler-Ross's (1969) model is depression, a stage in which the partial acceptance of the second stage gives way to a more complete realisation of impending death. Denial, anger, and bargaining have all failed, so the patient becomes dejected in the face of everything that he or she has suffered and all that will be lost in dying. Kübler-Ross considered depression like the preceding three stages, to be a normal and necessary step toward the final peace that comes with complete acceptance of death.

The last stage in the dying process, that of acceptance, is characterised by "quiet expectation" (Aiken, 2001). The patient now fully accepts death's inevitability and its blessings in terms of release from pain and anxiety. The patient may reminisce about life, eventually coming to terms with it, and acknowledge that the experience has been

meaningful and valuable. This is a time of disengagement from everyone except a few family members and friends, and the medical staff (Kübler-Ross, 1969).

Kübler-Ross's observations and investigations of the dying process are valuable contributions to thanatology, but her stage theory has not escaped criticism. It has been alleged that the orderly listing or sequencing of these stages and the precise order of the reactions of dying people are inflexible. Although some writers have suggested that the stages of dying theory are too rigid, this appears to be based on incomplete examination of the theory. For example, Kubler-Ross proposed that not all of the stages occur in every case, that they do not always follow the sequence presented here, and that an individual can return to a previous stage having appeared to have moved on.

A number of theorists (e.g., Lerch, 1984; Rosenberg, 1984) have drawn parallels between the stages of dying and athletes' adjustment to retirement from sport. The stages of dying, as described by Kubler-Ross (1969), when applied to retirement from sport, include: (a) denial against the initial trauma, in which the athlete refuses to acknowledge their career is over, (b) anger about the perceived injustice of sports career termination and their lack of control, (c) bargaining, in which the athlete negotiates for conditions to delay the inevitable, (d) depression over recognition that retirement is happening, and (e) full acceptance, in which the athlete accepts his or her career has ended.

Recovery from social death is possible, because it lacks the finality of real death, however, it is common for athletes to mourn the loss of their careers, either publicly or privately, drifting in and out of different stages in terms of their reactions. Ogilvie and Howe (1986) suggested that, the sequential stages of a dying person's progression toward acceptance of his or her death have been a useful means by which the

experiences of the retired athlete may be understood. Blinde and Greendorfer (1992) however, suggested that despite the inevitability of this role exit, athletes do not respond to this process in an identical manner. Also, not every sport retiree may experience the stages of dying, regardless of the mode by which athletes exit the sport role and the voluntary/involuntary nature of the decision to exit.

Models of Human Adaptation

Crook and Robertson (1991) suggested that human adaptation theories incorporate a wider range of influence than gerontological and thanatological models and allow for both negative and positive adjustment. Unlike gerontological and thanatological models, many researchers of human adaptation theories (Hill & Lowe, 1974; McPherson, 1980; Schlossberg, 1981) have viewed retirement as a transition or process, focussing on life-span development.

In Schlossberg's (1981) model, a transition is any event and/or non-event, that brings about change. Schlossberg noted the importance of the evaluation of internal support systems, institutional support, and physical settings. Schlossberg suggested that successful transition depends on several interacting factors characterising the transition itself (e.g., timing, duration), the individual (personal characteristics, coping resources), and the transition environment (e.g., social support). These three interacting factors are seen as potential assets or liabilities. A person is, therefore, expected to have an easier transition when his/her assets outweigh liabilities.

Schlossberg (1981) suggested that the role change, affect, source, onset, duration, and degree of stressors are all important factors to consider in career transition. Second, individual attributes, such as psychosocial competence, sex, age, state of health,

race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, value orientation, and previous experience with a transition of a similar nature affect the retirement process, according to Schlossberg (1981). These attributes may vary considerably across the population of athletes and are all factors influencing the athlete in transition (Coakley, 1983). Third, Schlossberg noted the importance to the evaluation of internal support systems, institutional support, and the physical setting, however, few empirical studies have been conducted in this area of career termination.

Swain (1991) found Schlossberg's (1981) model useful in understanding retirement transitions of elite Canadian, ice-hockey, football, and racquetball players. Chow (2001), in a study of elite female athletes, used semi structured interviews, based on the Schlossberg model. Wheeler, Malone, VanVlack, Nelson, and Steadward (1996) applied Schlossberg's transition model to a study of adjustment to sport retirement among athletes with disabilities. All studies showed the emotional influence of retirement was to deal with such liabilities as loss of physical fitness, travel opportunities, friendships, social contacts, and self-identity, and suggested that the Schlossberg model is a useful framework for examining athlete transition and adjustment to retirement.

According to Crook and Robertson (1991), human adaptation models do incorporate a wider range of factors related to athletic career termination than social gerontological and thanatological theories, allowing for the possibility of both positive and negative adjustment. The model of human adaptation, as proposed by Schlossberg (1981), has been applied to the study of athlete retirement, although not frequently. According to Swain (1991), Schlossberg's transition model provides a flexible, multidimensional approach to the examination of athlete retirement. Further evidence in

support for this theoretical perspective is evident in Baillie and Danish's (1992) study of former elite, amateur and professional athletes. Sinclair and Orlick (1993), however, suggested that every athletic career retirement has the potential to be a crisis.

Since there has been little attempt to integrate individual theories, there is no single comprehensive theory of adaptation to retirement from sport. Furthermore, despite the extensive empirical and theoretical literature on retirement from sport, social gerontological, thanatological, and human adaptation theories have been unable to adequately capture the nature and dynamics of the career transition process into retirement, specifically the individual, situational, and personal characteristics of retirement from sport. As outlined by Taylor and Ogilvie (1998), understanding the number of interrelated variables may explain some of the individual variation in levels of overall quality of adjustment and life satisfaction in retirement.

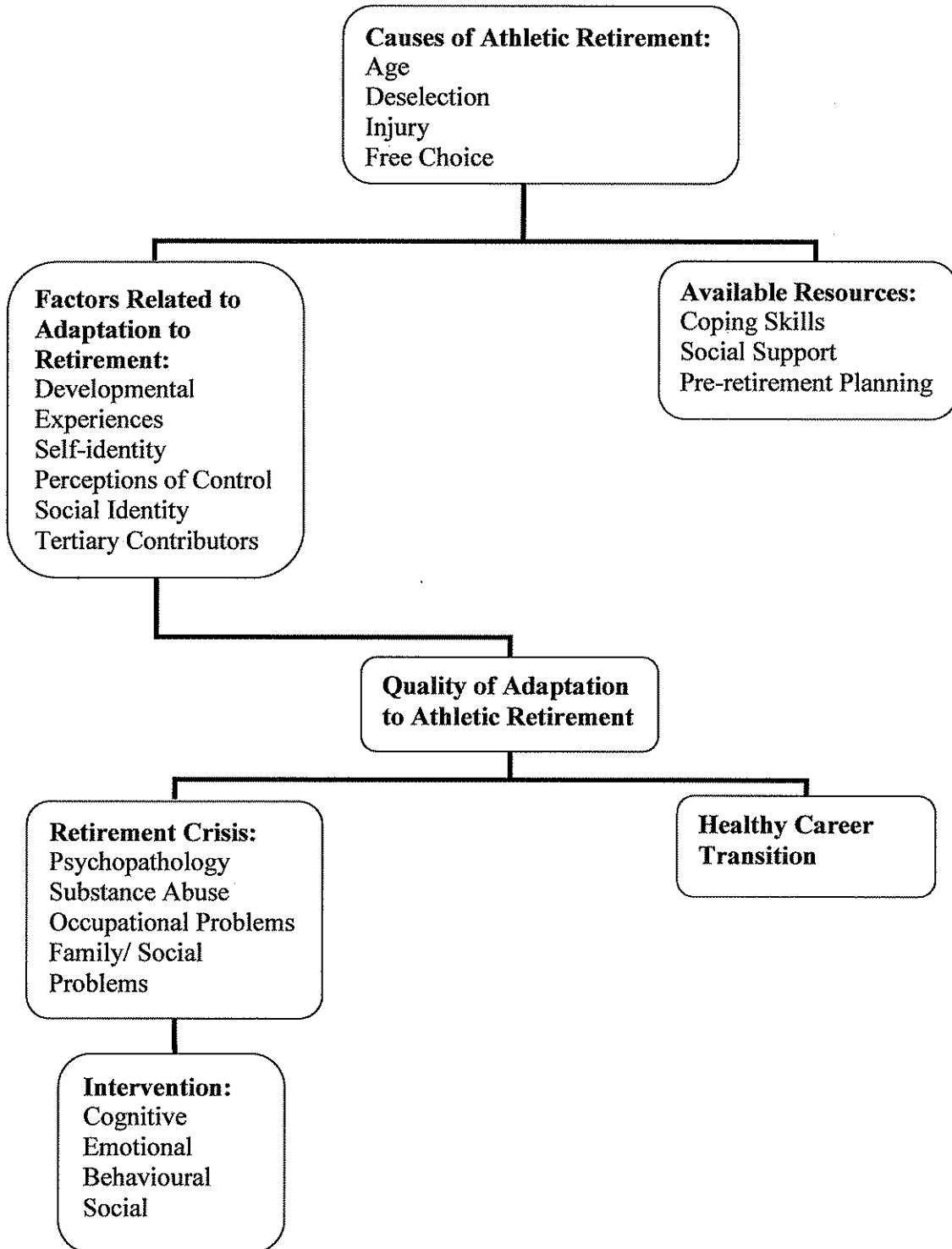
Taylor and Ogilvie's (1998) conceptual model of career transition in sport illustrates causal factors that initiate career transition (e.g., deselection, age, injury, free choice), interacting and developmental factors relating to retirement adaptation (e.g., transition, individual, and environmental characteristics), tertiary factors that mediate adaptation (e.g., social support and coping resources/skills) and potential sites for intervention (e.g., career transition and assistance programs).

Although the debate regarding the prevalence of difficulties during career transition still lingers, the career transition process seems to be an inevitable stimulus for adjustment (Gordon & Lavalley, 2001). Numerous studies have revealed that a significant number of athletes experience difficulties upon career termination (Haerle, 1975; Mihovilovic, 1968). Mihovilovic (1968), in a study of 44 male Yugoslavian soccer players, and Haerle (1975), in a study of 312 former baseball players, found that

retiring from sport is an inevitable source of emotional distress. Several contrasting studies have revealed little or no evidence of difficulties associated with the career transition process. Gorbett (1985) suggested that it is naïve to assume that former athletes are universally overwhelmed by retirement-induced stress. In addition, in a survey of 28 retired, professional tennis players, Allison and Meyer (1988) found that most participants did not find disengagement from sport traumatic, perceiving it to be an opportunity to re-establish more traditional social roles and lifestyles. Allison and Meyer noted that many of the participants in their sample reported that they had not planned to enter a professional tennis career, rather they had found themselves involved and seen little opportunity to opt out.

Taylor and Ogilvie's (1998) conceptual model of career transition (Figure 2.1) appears to illustrate the factors that specifically relate to adaptation to career transition. It also shows how, once transition difficulties are confirmed, appropriate therapeutic interventions can be introduced.

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Model of Career Transition



(Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001, p. 483)

Research on Retirement from Sport

General Research on Retirement from Sport

One of the most distressing experiences encountered by elite athletes is retirement from sport. Included in this section is a brief overview of major studies in the area of retirement from sport. Furthermore, I will outline research on the causal factors associated with retirement from sport.

Retirement from sport has only received academic interest in the last 30 years. Early studies involving retirement from sport often involved anecdotal depictions of elite athletes' lives following retirement and these studies frequently examined difficulties athletes had following retirement from sport (Hare, 1971; Hearle, 1975; Mihovilovic, 1968). Mihovilovic who studied of 44 male Yugoslavian soccer players found that retirement from sport can be a result of chronological age or career ending injury. Similar findings were reported by Hare, in his study of former professional boxers in America. In a survey of 312 former baseball players, in the United States of America, Hearle, investigated the level of pre-retirement planning for retirement and responses and attitudes following the event. He reported that only 25 percent of the players examined were making plans for the future and had accepted their career end.

The end of a sport career may be an easy transition for some athletes, however, for others, retirement can be a difficult and defining adjustment life event. Some researchers have studied the quality of adjustment to retirement by former elite athletes (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Avery & Jablin, 1988; Grove, Lavalley & Gordon, 1997; Lerch, 1981; Sinclair & Orlick, 1994; Webb, Nasco, Riley & Headrick, 1998; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). It has been suggested that the quality of adjustment to retirement is

likely to be a consequence of causes of retirement, developmental experiences available during an athlete's career, and sufficient coping resources. Although some athletes adjust quite well to retirement from sport, many athletes have reported adjustment to retirement as moderately stressful (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993) and as a "complex interaction of stressors" (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). Recent studies by Lavallee, Sinclair and Wylleman (1998), Taylor and Ogilvie (2001), and Werthner and Orlick, confirm that there is still considerable debate as to how well athletes adapt to retirement.

According to Taylor and Ogilvie (2001), retirement from sport involves a variety of unique experiences that sets it apart from typical retirement concerns, including the diverse ways in which athletes choose to, or are forced to, leave their sport. Researchers suggest that retirement from a sporting career is most frequently found to be a function of involuntary causes, such as career-ending injury, chronological age, and deselection, or voluntary causes, such as free choice (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001; Werthner & Orlick, 1986)

Research has shown that career-ending injury is a significant cause of retirement from sport. Mihovilovic (1968) suggested that 32 per cent of Yugoslavian professional soccer players retired involuntarily, due to career-ending injury. In a study of 163 Czechoslovakian athletes from 20 Olympic sports, Svoboda and Vanek (1982) reported that 24 per cent of athletes retired due to injury, while in a study of 28 elite Canadian athletes, Werthner and Orlick (1986) found that 14 per cent retired due to injury. Due to the unexpected nature of injuries and the way they preclude opportunities for the athlete to prepare for retirement, injury-related retirees often experience the most difficult adjustment to retirement (Fortunato, Anderson, Morris & Seedsman, 1995; Webb et al., 1998; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

A natural part of the maturation process is the slow deterioration of physical strength, endurance, flexibility and coordination (Fisher & Conlee, 1979). Deterioration of physical capabilities has a debilitating effect on performance and ultimately contributes to career termination. Taylor and Ogilvie (2001) suggested that age is one of the most significant reasons for retirement because psychological motivation and social status can also complicate an individual's ability to compete at the elite level. Mihovilovic (1969) reported that 27 per cent of athletes indicated that they were forced to retire because of their age. Furthermore, Allison and Meyer (1998) reported that 10 per cent of former female professional tennis players retired due to age.

According to Svoboda and Vanek (1982), the deselection process occurs at every level of competitive sports. Only a few studies, however, have looked at the impact that deselection has on retirement from sport. Mihovilovic (1968) found that 7 per cent of Yugoslavian professional soccer players were forced out by younger players. In a study of 48 former elite-amateur Australian athletes, Lavalley, Grove, and Gordon (1997) reported that an unanticipated "cut" or termination from a team was an important contributor to sports career termination.

In a study of the mediating factors and consequences of 117 Flemish Olympic athletes, Wylleman et al., (1993) demonstrated that many individuals choose to retire voluntarily due to a range of personal, physical, and psychological reasons. According to a number of studies (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Lavalley et al., 1997; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Werthner & Orlick 1986) athletes may wish to assume a new life direction, seek new challenges or sources of direction, have a change in values, want to spend more time with family, or immerse themselves in a new social milieu. These are all reasons why athletes voluntarily retire from sport. In their study of former elite

Canadian athletes, Werthner and Orlick suggested that 42 per cent of athletes freely chose to retire.

Brewer, Van Raalte, and Linder (1993) suggested that athletic identity may have an influence on the quality of adjustment to retirement from sport. Athletic identity refers to the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role (Brewer et al. 1993). According to Alfermann and Gross (1998), athletes tend to adjust better to retirement from sport, if they have a multiple identity, that is, an identity that is not exclusively defined by their success in their sport, but also by social relationships, experiences, and successes outside the sport domain. According to Werthner and Orlick (1986), athletes with a self identity almost exclusive of their sports involvement experience career termination as something very important that is lost and can never be recovered. Grove, Lavallee, and Gordon (1997) suggested that athletes who overly identified themselves with their sporting careers were most vulnerable to distress following retirement from sport. Murphy, Petitas, and Brewer (1996), Pearson and Petitas (1990) and Kerr and Dacyshyn (2000) have found that strong athletic identities are related to problems associated with involuntary retirement. Furthermore, Ogilvie and Taylor (1993) suggested that athletes may, therefore, question their self worth and future opportunities.

Retirement from sport is a difficult experience for many athletes that may trigger varying degrees of emotional and physical stress. According to Taylor and Ogilvie (2001), the presence of effective coping skills can reduce the distress that may occur following retirement from sport. Sinclair and Orlick (1993) suggested that coping strategies, such as keeping busy, maintaining a routine of training and exercise, social support, and staying in contact with sporting contacts, assists in the quality of adjustment

to retirement. Grove et al. (1997) also reported that planning, active coping, and seeking social support are commonly used coping strategies. Pearson and Petitas (1990) suggested that those athletes, with well developed coping resources, experience less stress than those athletes who possess fewer coping skills. In a study of 90 former elite athletes, Alfermann and Gross (1997) also found that social support from friends, family, team-mates, and coaches are important coping resources among retired athletes, particularly those athletes who retired involuntarily.

Over the last 15 years, a strong body of research has been built in Australia, whereby the retirement experiences of athletes from sport have been examined. In an exploratory study, Hawkins and Blann (1993) suggested that male and female athletes would prefer development and retirement preparation programs in individual or small group counselling sessions during and after their sporting careers. In a case study of 5 elite athletes, Hewitt (1994) suggested that the coach, age of the athlete, academic achievement, and outside interests influenced future vocational choices of retired athletes. Fish (1994) studied the short-term and long-term impact of deselection on retirement in 15 former field hockey, cricket, and water polo players. Fish found there was a lack of understanding about the impact of retirement, among sporting organisations, officials, team-mates, and family members. Fortunato et al. (1995) investigated Australian Football League (AFL) players whose careers ended involuntarily, through injury or deselection. Fortunato et al. also reported that retirement had a big impact for most of the footballers interviewed, especially those whose retirement was voluntary. Lavalley, Gordon, and Grove (1997) examined the causes of retirement and degree of adjustment required among former elite-amateur Australian athletes. Results revealed that involuntary retirement was related to significantly greater

emotional and social adjustment than was voluntary retirement. Furthermore, in a later study by Lavalley, Grove, and Gordon (1997), an investigation into the coping strategies of 15 former elite athletes revealed that confiding in others helped to modify stress and to assist in adjustment to retirement from sport. In a related study, Grove, Lavalley, and Gordon, (1997) collected data related to financial, occupational, emotional, and social adjustment to retirement from sport. Results suggested that acceptance, positive reinterpretation, planning and active coping strategies were used most frequently. Also, Speed, Morris, and Seedsman (2000) in reporting the welfare of retired horse racing jockeys, suggested retirement from riding had, at times, been stressful, particularly in the areas of financial, employment, education, recognition by the racing industry, social opportunities, and physical and mental health.

Retirement from elite sport is now a well-delineated topic of study among the sport psychology community, particularly within Australia. Research has shown that many athletes are poorly prepared for retirement from sport, and some face difficulties, according to causal factors, like athletic identity and coping strategies following retirement.

Voluntary and Involuntary Retirement

The reasons for career termination are manifold and may necessitate psychological, physical, or emotional adjustment (Koukouris, 1991; Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). What constitutes adjustment is likely to differ between individuals. Many researchers (Ogilvie, 1982; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Wylleman, De Knop, Anseeuw, De Clercq, Bouckaert & Bassez, 2001) have proposed that the retirement experience is likely to vary for athletes who retire voluntarily compared to those who retire

involuntarily. Research has demonstrated that the most common casual factors for sport retirement are chronological age, deselection, career-ending injury, and free-choice (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). In this section I examine the research on adjustment experiences of voluntarily and involuntarily retired athletes.

Athletes are often forced into retirement. In a study of adjustment problems, Mihovilovic (1968) reported that, for 95.4% of the soccer players, retirement was involuntary. Researchers have suggested that involuntary retirees experience more adjustment difficulties throughout retirement than voluntary retirees (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Kleiber & Brock, 1992). When an athlete is forced to withdraw, due to circumstances out of their control, their retirement is considered involuntary (Alfermann, 1995). According to Taylor and Ogilvie (1998) the three main involuntary causes of career termination are age, deselection, and injury or illness. Webb et al. (1998) suggested that athletes, who are forced into retirement by these involuntary causes, have been thrust into circumstances in which some measure of pre-emptive control has been removed. Involuntary causes of retirement, therefore, may affect an athlete's ability to effectively deal physically, psychologically, and socially with certain events following retirement from sport.

Athletes may freely elect to disengage from sport for a combination of personal, social, or psychological reasons. Reasons surrounding voluntary retirement may include a wish to assume a new direction in life (Lavalley, Grove & Gordon, 1997; Werthner & Orlick, 1986; Wylleman, 1995), engagement in a new social milieu, including family and friends (Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Allison & Meyer, 1993), lack of enjoyment or fulfilment from sport (Werthner & Orlick, 1986), seeking out new challenges or having a change in values (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1986; Lavalley, 2000). Other reasons include,

family problems (Mihovilovic, 1968), problems with coaches or the sporting organisation, and financial difficulties (Jowett & Meek, 2000; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). Voluntary retirement or free-choice of career termination is an often-neglected form of retirement (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). It should not be assumed that ending a career voluntarily eases the career transition process (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998). Several theorists have suggested that athletes who retire due to voluntary circumstances experience more adjustment difficulties (e.g., Crook & Robertson, 1991; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). According to Alfermann (1995), reasons surrounding voluntary retirement play a crucial role in the adjustment to post-career life. In a study of elite female gymnasts, Kerr and Dacyshyn (2000) found that several athletes who chose to retire still described their termination as difficult. The voluntary decision to retire may be due to a need to get out of an uncomfortable situation, such as high stress of competition or conflict with a coach (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001).

Physical Issues

Retirement from sport due to physical reasons, such as physical maturation (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982), and injury (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Mihovilovic, 1986; Werthner & Orlick, 1986) are prevalent issues in the sport retirement literature. Evidence from research suggests that a decline in performance, due to advancing age, is typically considered to be a primary cause of retirement (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Mihovilovic, 1968; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). Part of the maturation process is the slow deterioration of the physical capabilities that are required to perform physically at an elite level (Fisher & Conlee, 1979). With regard to physical ramifications of career-ending injury, permanent physical damage to bones, cartilage,

ligaments, or nerves, and arthritis may hamper an athlete's ability to lead a productive and fulfilling life, resulting in limited future career options following athletic retirement (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). In a study involving 91 high school, college, and professional sports participants, Webb et al. (1998) suggested that injury, rather than deselection and age, is likely to catch athletes off-guard. Webb et al. found that injury-related retirees had the most difficult adjustment, due to the unexpected nature of injuries, the way they preclude opportunities for the athlete to prepare for retirement, and the observation that injuries are seldom recognised immediately as career-ending. Forced retirement due to injury, therefore, can create a problematic context for retirement adjustment after a sporting career. In fact, research has indicated that between 14% and 32% of athletes retire because of serious injury (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Mihovilovic, 1986; Werthner & Orlick, 1986).

Researchers have argued that athletes who retire due to injury are at higher risk of experiencing psychological difficulties following retirement than those who retire voluntarily (Avery & Jablin, 1998; Ballie, 2002). In a qualitative study of 48 professional Australian Rules football players, including 15 who were injured, Fortunato (1998) centred on identifying key issues experienced by athletes following retirement. Fortunato found that injured players, forced into retirement, related stories about how they were unprepared for retirement and how their futures appeared uncertain. Similarly, Smith, Scott, O'Fallon, and Young (1990) found that seriously injured, retired athletes experienced significantly more tension, depression, and anger, and showed less vigor than those who retired voluntarily. A major change in attitude may be required to ensure a healthy adaptation to injury and life. Without this change in attitude, athletes may not be able to accept injuries and respond positively (Williams et al., 1998).

Athletes' reactions and adjustments to career-ending injuries may also involve a variety of psychological sequelae. In the case of athletic injury, stress associated with athletes' physical activity may carry over to affect general self-esteem, emotions, relationships with others, and non-sport roles (Gould, Bridges, Udry, & Beck, 1997). Further, Wiese-Bjornstal, Smith, and Lamott (1995) suggested that once injury occurs in sport, psychological consequences of that injury encompass cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses.

Athletic careers that end voluntarily do not necessarily preclude athletes from having difficulties in adjusting to retirement. Taylor and Ogilvie (2001) suggested that former athletes, who performed at an elite level in their chosen sport, may feel pressure to maintain peak physical condition and/or experience frustration due to physical deterioration that often accompanies retirement from sport. Also, although an athlete may freely choose to retire, they often experience chronic pain and sometimes permanent disability to varying degrees, as a result of involvement in sport (Allison & Meyer, 1988; Mihovilovic, 1986; Werthner & Orlick, 1986; Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). As a consequence, an injury need not be serious to have dramatic impact on athletes' performance and, in turn, their career (Taylor & Ogilvie).

Regardless of the type of retirement, injuries sustained during their athletic careers may affect adjustment to retirement of athletes, in such ways as serious distress, manifested in depression, and suicidal ideation and attempts (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982), and perhaps limit their choice of new careers (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). Furthermore, it is believed that career ending injuries can cause athletes to experience an identity crisis (Elkin, 1981), fear, anxiety, loss of status, and lack of self-confidence (Rotella & Heyman, 1993).

Mental Issues

According to McLaughlin (1981), adjustment to retirement is a difficult experience for all retirees and triggers varying degrees of emotional stress. Ogilvie and Howe (1982) suggested that each individual faces a period of mental adjustment, including denial, anger, resentment, and/or depression, during the transition from athlete to ex-athlete. Smith et al. (1990) found that athletes with strong athletic identities are often more vulnerable to feelings of anxiety, depression, or hopelessness than those who identify less with the role of the athlete. McPherson (1980) suggested that some athletes will have an identity that is composed almost exclusively of their sports involvement. Furthermore, in a study of retirement experiences of 28 former Canadian Olympic athletes, Werthner and Orlick (1986) reported that many elite performers defined themselves as an athlete, excluding almost everything else from their lives. Although Werthner and Orlick's research involved open ended, in-depth interviews with former elite amateur athletes, there was no clear distinction between the retirement experiences of athletes from different sports. Werthner and Orlick, did, however, find that involuntary retirement was associated with greater adjustment problems.

Several cognitive influences have also been linked with involuntary retirement, specifically injury. Self-identity is a variable that has been comprehensively researched in relation to stress and sport injury. In a series of four studies, Brewer et al. (1993) reported that athletic identity was positively associated with depressive reactions to sport injury, particularly for those athletes with a strong and exclusive athletic identity. Similarly, Pearson and Petitipas (1990) contended that retirement forced by athletic injury would be particularly disruptive to an individual's identity. As mentioned

previously, involvement in and commitment to elite sport seldom leaves sufficient time or opportunity for exploring options outside that sport (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993). Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) suggested that an athlete's inability to assume other roles outside of the athletic setting, following injury and, consequently, forced retirement, may severely inhibit the athlete upon retirement. Webb et al. (1998) suggested that another form of involuntary retirement, deselection, may force athletes to confront the inherent limitations of their athletic ability, causing a diminution of self-esteem, self-confidence, and questioning athletic identity. Furthermore, Webb et al. suggested that voluntary retirement (i.e., free choice to retire) allows for new identities to be developed prior to retirement, resulting in fewer difficulties in adjusting to retirement when the athlete does quit the sport.

Social Issues

Blinde and Greendorfer (1985) and McPherson (1980) suggested that the absence of alternative social support (e.g., family and friends) may cause an athlete to become isolated, lonely, and unsustained socially upon retirement, leading to significant distress. Rotella and Heyman (1993) proposed that friendships are often based exclusively on the role of the athlete and, suddenly, these important social ties may be ruptured when athletes retire.

The social status of an involuntarily retired athlete (e.g., ageing, deselected, or injured) may contribute to retirement difficulties (Lavalley et al., 1997). Aged athletes may no longer be seen or see themselves as athletes. Athletes whose socialisation process occurred primarily in the sport environment may be characterised as "role restricted" (Wylleman & Lavalley, 2004). Furthermore, Rotella and Heyman (1993)

observed that no one quite knows how to relate to these athletes, except perhaps in terms of their past glory. Gould, Bridges, Udry, and Beck (1997) examined the effects of coping skills and social support, following the occurrence of injury for 21 U.S. alpine and freestyle skiers. Gould et al. found that athletes experienced a perceived lack of attention and feelings of isolation and, in most cases, the sense of isolation pertained to feeling cut-off from their coach, teammates, and close friends. Further, Thoits (1995) suggested that the onset of a relatively severe stress (e.g., career-ending injury) may create increased social dependency, resulting in the mobilization of social resources.

Research has shown that voluntarily retired athletes also experience problems with social issues. In a study of Czechoslovakian national team athletes, Svoboda and Vanek (1982) found that, when athletes voluntarily terminated their careers, values of aging athletes shifted from a self-focus toward a focus on family and friends. According to Taylor and Ogilvie (1994), when an athlete retires voluntarily, they are no longer an integral part of the team or organisation and poor social support from past team members, family, and friends may adversely affect the athletes' adaptation to retirement. Furthermore, Ogilvie and Howe (1986) suggested that athletes and their families must deal with new economic realities and the added stress of educational or vocational training and finding a job to earn a living, following voluntary retirement. Evidence cited by Webb et al. (1998), however, suggests that elite athletes, who are preparing to retire, often organise jobs before retiring.

In the case of the elite athlete, even though the timing and form of retirement may be uncertain, the transitional event to retirement from sport will definitely occur (Stambulova, 2000). If we want to know the whole athlete, then the different adjustment contexts, namely physical, mental, and social, need to be taken into account. This

section has provided a summary of the factors associated with the quality of one's adjustment to life after elite sport following voluntary or involuntary retirement.

According to Lavallee et al. (1997), there is little research available on the topic of the impact voluntary and involuntary reasons for retirement have on the ongoing adjustment process. Unfortunately, it would seem that elite athletes are frequently unprepared for retirement, irrespective of whether or not their retirement comes about voluntarily or involuntarily (Fortunato & Morris, 1998).

Duration of Retirement

A range of theories and models of retirement have been applied to athlete retirement research. Many of the theories, however, were developed over 30 years ago and may no longer be as suitable or relevant when referring to career termination. Nowadays, due to changes in societal work pressures and the comfort and freedom of retirement, people are retiring earlier. Furthermore, with improvements in science and living conditions, people are living longer and the retirement process is longer than ever before, and, duration of retirement is, therefore, increasing. The concept of longer duration of retirement from work can be applied to sport also. Many athletes from various sports retire long before the typical retirement age and experience a lengthy duration of retirement, regardless of the type of retirement (voluntary or involuntary). In this section, I will consider the appropriateness of applying a range of gerontological models of aging, thanatological models of death and dying, and models of human adaptation to transition to duration of retirement from sport.

Although a number of gerontological theories can be applied to retirement from sport, they are rarely used in the study of retirement from sport over time. Some of these

theories, however, may be particularly effective, flexible and suitable enough to be related to duration of retirement from sport. Disengagement theory when applied to sport has shown that many athletes do disengage from the world of sport, however, there has been no study that indicates the effectiveness of this approach on former athletes over the duration of retirement. According to Ogilvie (1982), one limitation of the use of disengagement theory in sport, is that disengagement in the withdrawal process may lead to difficulty in adapting to old age. In relation to duration of retirement from sport, this is particularly concerning. Athletes usually retire from sport at quite a young age (in comparison to retirement from the workforce) and, if the former athlete does not engage in the withdrawal process for a lengthy period of time, it is likely that they will experience problems adapting to retirement. Social breakdown theory has not yet been successfully applied to the study of duration of retirement from sport. According to Gordon and Lavalley (2001), social breakdown theory addresses the potential for minimisation of social breakdowns and smoothing out of the transition period. There is concern, however, that this process may only be suitable for a short time following retirement. Long-term transition, therefore, may be more difficult for those who experience more social breakdown during the transition to retirement from sport. Activity theorists (Burgess, 1960; Havighurst, 1963) suggest that involvement in and maintenance of a major role is likely to support athletes throughout the duration of retirement, assisting in the development of a positive self-concept and high satisfaction (Burgess). Whether former athletes remain involved or not, many athletes take on new major roles in their family and work contexts, while maintaining a similar level of work activity to what they experienced in their sporting days. For example, a number of top sport performers have become successful in business, and a range of other moderate to

high profile pursuits (e.g., public speaking, community service roles). It is not known, however, whether activity helps former athletes to cope with retirement over the long-term. Continuity theory may also be suitably applied to the study of duration of retirement from sport, with a focus on longevity of retirement experiences of athletes. Continuity theory proposes that the retirement transition is facilitated when an athlete attempts to retain a continuity in their activity or role by taking on other sport-related roles (e.g., coach, administrator, sports writer). The former athlete, therefore, remains connected to sport, maintaining relatively stable income and a level of subjective and behavioural commitment to sport following retirement (Lerch, 1981).

It is also not yet known whether two thanatology theories, awareness context theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1965) and Kubler-Ross' (1969) stages of dying, can be suitably applied to retirement from sport. Glaser and Strauss' awareness context theory, and the concept of social death that may accompany athletic retirement, may not be appropriate in the study of retirement from sport over time. According to Taylor and Ogilvie (1994) and Lavallee and Wylleman (2004) the awareness context theory is limited when applied to sport due it's inability to adapt to life span development following retirement, career transition, the career termination adjustment process, and, ultimately, duration of retirement from sport. Although former athletes may experience stages of Kubler-Ross' dying theory, such as anger and depression, the theory is not likely to be suitable in the study of retirement from sport over time. In order for this theory to be effective, former athletes must reach the final stage, acceptance, before they move through the remaining years of retirement, which may continue for 30, 40 or even 50 years depending on when retirement from sport occurred.

Schlossberg (1981), using a model of human adaptation, and, Taylor and Ogilvie's (1998), using a conceptual model of career transition suggested that many athletes have not adapted well to retirement from sport. Schlossberg's (1981) model of human adaptation, has been applied to numerous studies of retirement from sport (Chow, 2001; Swain, 1991; Wheeler, Malone, VanVlack, Nelson, & Steadward, 1996), dealing with the impact of retirement on former athletes. Although this model has been successful in examining athlete transition and adjustment to retirement and provides a flexible, multidimensional approach (Swain, 1991), it has not been applied to studies of impact over different durations of retirement from sport, including long-term effects. Similarly, Taylor and Ogilvie's (1998) conceptual model of career transition proposes interventions to deal with causal factors that initiate career transition, however, this model has not been examined in relation to interventions with former athletes over time.

Very few studies (e.g., Kleiber & Brock, 1992; Lerch, 1984) have examined the impact of duration of retirement of former athletes (i.e. more than 3 years). The majority of retirement studies of former athletes, however, have looked at retirement over a moderate duration (e.g., Grove, Lavalley & Gordon, 1997; Parker, 1994; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993), (i.e. between 18 months and 3 years) and quite a lot of research has focussed on short-term retirement of former athletes (e.g., Ahlgren, 1995; Fortunato & Marchant, 1996; McNally, Cavib-Stice, & Knoth, 1992; Munroe & Albinson, 1996; Rosenberg, 1981; Werthner & Orlick, 1986), (i.e. less than 18 months).

There are numerous problems associated with drawing conclusions about the impact of duration of retirement on former athletes, due to the different contexts with which athletes live, compete and retire in. Studies that have examined the affect of duration of retirement have involved numerous sports, have been conducted at different

times in history and involved former athletes from different countries and cultures. Given the lack of long term research on the impact of duration of retirement on former athletes, there is a need to examine the cause of transition effects longitudinally. Cross-sectional studies are weakened by differences such as those previously mentioned. For example, many sports today are recognised businesses and athletes are provided with excellent remuneration that helps support them in their retirement years. Sport nowadays also provides great opportunities for continuity in such roles as coaching, administration or commentary positions for former athletes. This is especially true when compared to sport 10 years ago. In order to address cohort problems such as those previously mentioned and to assist researchers in keeping up to date with current trends in retirement from sport, longitudinal studies are likely to be the most effective research method. This method does not completely address all issues related to the factors that affect the long-term impact of retirement, and suffers from the cohort problem. An examination of the current level of physical, mental and social adjustment of athletes who have been retired for different durations (short-term, moderate-term, long-term) can provide a basis for more extensive research on this issue that could be important for former athletes of all ages.

Jockey Specific Retirement

As Ogilvie and Taylor (1993) suggested, there has been a steady stream of anecdotal, theoretical, and empirical exploration of career termination among athletes. Numerous studies have examined the potential difficulties associated with athletic career termination (Baillie & Danish, 1992; Crook & Robertson, 1991; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994), however, there is a paucity of information relating to professional horse racing

and the retirement of jockeys (Lippincott-Williams & Wilkins, 2001; Speed, Seedsman, & Morris, 2001; Turner, McCrory, & Halley, 2002).

Personal distress experienced by jockeys may be associated with a loss of income, loss of identity and lowered self esteem, as well as being disconnected from their sporting relationships and society in general following retirement (Speed et al., 2001). The severity of personal distress, however, may differ depending on the type of retirement the jockey experiences (i.e., voluntary or involuntary). Retirement for jockeys, as in all professional sports, may be a consequence of aging, injury, deselection, or free choice. Speed et al. (2001) reported that the majority of retired jockeys indicated that their retirement was involuntary, the main reason being injury.

The career of a professional jockey is laden with physical demands and danger, as well as psychological threat (Speed et al., 2001). Every day, jockeys are faced with the risk of career-ending injury. According to Lippincott-Williams & Wilkins (2001), jockeys are regularly catapulted off their mounts, impacting the ground at high speeds. Horses are known to kick, trample, head-butt, or even crush their riders (Lippincott-Williams & Wilkins, 2001). Recent evidence from the study by Speed et al., indicates that as many as 70% of jockeys retire involuntarily from riding because of injury.

According to Lippincott-Williams and Wilkins (2001), jockeys often suffer both repeated major and minor trauma. Turner, McCrory, and Halley (2002) suggested that jockeys take soft tissue injuries as a part of everyday life and although jockeys tend to return to riding relatively quickly, this depends on the availability of rides, rather than the injury necessarily being resolved. In support of this, Fletcher, Davies, Lewis, and Campbell (1995) suggested that jockeys accept bony fractures and soft tissue injuries as occupational hazards. Although they are rarely noticed, ongoing trauma and just plain

wear and tear to the body may have devastating consequences. McLatchie and Jennett (1994) reported that repeated injuries, even if mild, can cause cumulative damage and lead to retirement from riding. Further, Lippincott-Williams and Wilkins (2001) suggested that high levels of injury and repeated trauma may translate into functional problems and disability later in life. This was evident in the Speed et al. (2001) study, where it was reported that more than 40% of retired jockeys reported experiencing back problems, arthritis, and other joint problems since retiring.

A significant number of jockeys are also forced into premature retirement each year because of a single career-ending injury (Speed et al., 2001). Patel, Turner, Birch, and McCrory (2001) reported that, in England, in the 8-year period from 1992 to 1999 inclusive, the average number of rides undertaken by a jockey was 380 per year, that a jockey falls every 268 rides, is injured every 673 rides and suffers serious career-ending injury every 3,994 rides. Statistics released by the Jockeys Guild in North America estimated that more than 100 jockeys died as a result of racing accidents from 1950 to 1987 (DeBenedette, 1987). A further 37 jockeys retired due to catastrophic injury, specifically spinal cord injuries leading to permanent disability (DeBenedette, 1987).

Deselection for jockeys usually occurs in the form of performance slumps, suspension, disqualification, lack of success, and loss of marketability, leading to rides drying up and a lack of opportunity, all of which may influence the longevity of a jockey's career. According to Speed et al. (2001), lack of opportunity is a common reason for retirement from riding and directly affects the earning potential of jockeys. Speed et al. estimated that at the time of their survey, the average number of rides for a moderately successful jockey was 294 per year, with consolidated average earnings, including winning and losing rides, of (AUS) \$45,380. Furthermore, Speed et al. found

that, following retirement, more than 50% of jockeys reported an annual income of less than \$30,000 and only 8% earned more than \$50,000. It is not surprising, therefore, that over 60% of jockeys experienced financial difficulties during their retirement and continued to have serious concerns about their future financial circumstances.

With their total involvement in racing from an early age, many jockeys do not have the opportunity to establish links or resources to help them cope with some of the personal circumstances that they must face following retirement. Personal characteristics of retirement for jockeys that are intrinsic to the individual jockey include the jockey's self-beliefs (perceptions of control, self-worth, self-identity, and social-identity), beliefs about significant others (e.g., spouse's response to their retirement, the racing community's attitudes toward them), and the jockeys' adaptive (e.g., social engagement, adoption of other interests, such as hobbies or recreational activities) and/or non-adaptive (e.g., substance abuse, isolation) behaviours during retirement. Speed et al., (2001) suggested that personal experiences of jockeys following retirement, such as an inability to form an identity outside racing can bring about feelings of emotional distress (inability to cope), and loss of confidence.

According to Speed et al. (2001), retirement from riding can be seen as an opportunity for personal growth and development, a time to engage in family commitments, or a chance to extend social networks. It may also be a stressful event characterised by limited employment opportunities, financial hardship, poor physical health, and/or emotional distress.

Education and employment opportunities beyond their immediate environment are two areas in which many jockeys have also experienced problems following retirement (Speed et al., 2001). With limited prior work experience outside riding and

minimal levels of formal education, leaving professional riding to pursue employment in areas outside the racing industry may not be a realistic option for some jockeys. Speed et al. suggested that, although most retired jockeys had been engaged in continuous employment since they retired from riding, many jockeys (42%) felt that their employment options were restricted, because of a lack of job opportunities or a lack of prior employment history outside of racing (47%). Lack of job opportunities may also create financial difficulties for some retired jockeys. Further, Speed et al. reported that approximately 60% of retired jockeys indicated that they had experienced financial difficulties since retiring from riding and over 50% were concerned about their financial future. This financial concern, lack of formal education, and minimal job skills may act to undermine a jockey's self-esteem and self-confidence, limiting social support and creating additional issues for jockeys to deal with in retirement.

Speed et al. (2001) also found that maintaining a social life within the racing industry and establishing new contacts outside the racing industry were difficult tasks for many jockeys following retirement. Limited opportunities to develop social networks outside racing and the lack of ability to move successfully into new social groups and develop non-racing contacts have been barriers for most jockeys (Speed et al., 2001). These findings support the arguments of Koukouris (1994), Blinde and Greendorfer (1985), and Coakley (1983), who have suggested that athletes with limited employment skills, material resources, or social contacts tend to experience adjustment difficulties. A deficient social network and a lack of social support, therefore, may make retirement more difficult for jockeys. Speed et al. (2001) also suggested that, although some top jockeys have access to professional services and support networks, and retire from riding

to a secure home and employment base, there are many who do not have financial security or professional advice, sometimes with tragic consequences.

The Present Thesis

The life of an elite athlete involves full time physical, mental and social commitment to training and competition, in a disciplined and structured environment. Due to these requirements of elite sport, retirement from sport is unique and provides an experience, that can be traumatic. Retirement from horse racing in particular, is often problematic for jockeys (Lippincott-Williams & Williams, 2001; Speed, Seedsman, & Morris, 2001; Turner, et al., 2002).

Retirement from elite sport generally is associated with adjustment problems (Grove, Lavalley, & Gordon, 1997; Lavalley & Wylleman, 2000). These problems may cause distress that may manifest itself physically, mentally, or socially (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). A range of theories and models of retirement have been applied in athlete retirement research in order to understand the retirement process, including social gerontological models of aging, thanatological models of death and dying, and models of human adaptation to transition.

Based on what has been presented in the literature review, the present thesis is going to examine issues to do with the nature of retirement. The present thesis will examine retirement experiences of jockeys, especially adjustment to retirement from riding, to examine the effect of voluntary and involuntary retirement on adjustment to retirement, and, to examine the effect of length of retirement and on adjustment experienced during retirement.

Aims

General Aim

To examine the adjustment to retirement of horse racing jockeys.

Specific Aims

1. To examine the experiences of physical, mental, and social adjustment of retired jockeys.
2. To compare the experiences of physical, mental, and social adjustment of former jockeys who retired voluntarily with those of former jockeys whose retirement was involuntary.
3. To compare the experiences of physical, mental, and social adjustment in former jockeys who have been retired for less than 10 years, between 10 and 20 years, and for more than 20 years.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The research comprising this thesis was part of a larger study conducted by Speed et al., (2001). The study by Speed et al., investigated the jockeys life in racing, the retirement issues of jockeys, strategies used in retirement, available support services. Using this research, the present thesis examined various aspects of the Speed et al. (2001) research, specifically the physical, mental and social adjustment to retirement from riding. Other aspects examined were the effects of voluntary and involuntary retirement on adjustment to retirement, and the effect length of retirement has on adjustment to retirement.

Participants

The participants were 72 retired jockeys aged between 27 and 79 years, with a mean age of 52.1 years ($SD = 12.44$). These participants represented 26% of 276 retired jockeys, who were sent an invitation to participate in this study to their mailing address, according to the records of the Victorian Jockeys Association (VJA), Racing Victoria, part issues of Inside Racing, the internet-based White Pages (Telstra) and personal contacts of the research team. The sample comprised 97% male and 3% female retired jockeys. The average career duration of the retired jockeys was 19.8 years ($SD = 9.3$) and ranged between 4 and 45 years. The average length of years retired was 16.04 years ($SD = 11.32$) and length of retirement ranged from 1 to 41 years.

Design

The research team (Speed et al., 2001) sent a questionnaire, covering a range of physical, mental, and social aspects of the life of ex-jockeys since retirement, to retired

jockeys within Victoria. Based on responses to the questionnaire, I examined the overall patterns of physical, mental, and social experiences of retired jockeys in this thesis. Further, in this thesis, I compared those jockeys who were classified as voluntary and involuntary retirees and explored the relationship between length of retirement and experiences of involuntarily retired jockeys.

Measures

Background Information Questionnaire

A background information questionnaire was included in the package sent to the former jockeys. The background information questionnaire included questions about the personal details of jockeys (e.g., age, marital status), specific involvement in riding (i.e., duration and reasons for riding, details of injuries), and their current retirement status (i.e., years since retired from riding, reasons for retirement), all in open-ended items.

Retired Jockeys Questionnaire

The Retired Jockeys Questionnaire (Speed et al., 2001) was developed for the purposes of the larger study. The questionnaire for retired jockeys consisted of 34 items. Questionnaire items were based on the key aspects of retirement from sport, in general, and racing in particular. These items were generated from previous theory and research on retirement transitions, as well as a qualitative component of the original study of retirement of jockeys (Speed et al., 2001). Specifically, the items addressed material well-being, health, productivity, financial and employment circumstances, place in the community, and emotional well-being. Only sections on physical, mental, and social issues, however, are addressed in this thesis. The items employed here did not go

through any further validation. Participants indicated their current status, as well as problems of, and satisfaction with, these key aspects of retirement. Participants were instructed to respond to the series of statements in relation to their experiences in retirement. An example of measuring current status is “I am satisfied with my current financial situation”. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert type scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). An example of a question in relation to the problem areas is, “Has weight gain been a problem in your retirement?” Problem areas of life were rated from 1 (*very much a problem*) to 5 (*not a problem at all*). An example of a question in relation to satisfaction is, “How satisfied are you with your life today?” Satisfaction was measured on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*). Total scores were calculated by summing the responses to the items in each sub-scale, with low scores indicating a positive assessment of quality of life following retirement and high scores indicating a less positive assessment of quality of life following retirement.

Procedure

Access to jockeys was sought and approved by the VJA and Racing Victoria. The Retired Jockeys Questionnaire (Speed et al., 2001) return was taken as consent to participate in the study. The research team sent a questionnaire package together with a plain language statement that outlined the objectives of the larger study by mail to all former (retired) jockeys residing in Victoria. The questionnaires did not request identifying information. The questionnaires were coded by the researchers to allow for the sending of a follow up reminder to those not responding to the first mailing, and to facilitate the removal of data provided by any participant, who wished to withdraw from

the study. Any documentation that matched codes with identifying information has been kept separately from the completed questionnaires and was only available to the researchers. Upon completion of the questionnaires, participants were requested to return the questionnaires to the principal researcher in an enclosed reply-paid envelope. Each questionnaire was checked to ensure that all items were filled in. At the conclusion of the data analysis, a summary report was provided to the VJA for racing officials and participants to view. No identifying information was made available to the VJA.

Analysis

Raw data from the sections of the questionnaire on physical, mental and social issues were extracted. I analysed the data to determine the experiences of retired jockeys. I grouped data into physical, mental, and social forms of adjustment. I used descriptive statistical methods to examine the overall patterns of experience of retired jockeys. I compared the experiences of voluntary and involuntary retirees using t-tests, with the original $\alpha = .05$ modified by Bonferroni corrections to recognise multiple comparisons for physical, mental, and social experiences. I examined the experiences of involuntarily retired jockeys, who had been retired for less than 10 years, between 10 and 20 years, and greater than 20 years, using a one-way ANOVA to compare physical, mental, and social experiences.