**A test of the cognitive and affective components of challenge and threat states**

Objectives

This study examined the relationship between the cognitive and affective components of the theory of challenge and threat states in athletes (TCTSA). It was expected that cognitive components, specifically self-efficacy, perceived control, and achievement goals, predict challenge and threat appraisals and emotional states, as well as the interpretation of emotional state.

Design

A cross-sectional design was employed to measure self-efficacy, perceived control, achievement goals, emotional state, interpretation of emotional state, and challenge and threat cognitive appraisal in relation to how participants typically approach an important competition.

Method

177 collegiate athletes completed questionnaires measuring the cognitive and affective components of challenge and threat states.

Results

A regression analysis was performed to examine if cognitive elements predicted challenge and threat appraisals and emotions. Threat appraisal was predicted by avoidance goals and emotions were predicted by cognitive components. There was a negative association between anxiety and self-efficacy and a positive association between anxiety and avoidance goals. Also, differences between challenge and threat appraisal patterns (high challenge/high threat, high challenge/low threat, low challenge/high threat, low challenge/low threat) were analysed. Participants with a high challenge and low threat appraisals pattern scored higher on self-efficacy and lower on avoidance goals and anxiety than other challenge/threat patterns.

Conclusions

The results provide support for the TCTSA. What athletes think, based on their cognitive components, influences the emotions they experience, and their approaches to competition.