

S14-2: A Scoping Review of Research About Women in Sport: A Perspective From the Island of Ireland

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Purpose: Women remain under-represented in many sport settings, and they are particularly under-represented in research. Between 2014 and 2020, only 34% of participants in sport and exercise science studies were female, with less than 10% of studies focused solely on females (Cowley et al., 2021). Additionally, there is often a lack of collective thinking and action across universities and the sport sector in research about women in sport, including on the island of Ireland.

Methods: To support the strategic development of research within this region, we conducted a scoping review to systematically identify, analyse, and synthesise existing literature about women in sport on the island of Ireland. Research about women in sport in Ireland has grown significantly over the last five years.

Results: Primary topics fell into five main areas: injury ($k = 86$), sport performance ($k = 72$), sport, health, and wellbeing ($k = 65$), society and culture ($k = 38$), and coaching and professional practice ($k = 13$). We identified numerous trends, including the dominance of cross-sectional research designs and quantitative methods, tendency to conduct research through a monodisciplinary lens, and inconsistent reporting of sex/gender in published literature.

Conclusion: While this review highlights research priorities specific to the island of Ireland, it offers a template for other regions to replicate and some relevant learning for researchers worldwide in their respective and collective efforts to improve the experiences of women in sport. We have developed our work into a public facing report and other dissemination materials to advocate for change.

Reference:

Cowley, E. S., Olenick, A. A., McNulty, K. L., & Ross, E. Z. (2021). "Invisible sportswomen": The sex data gap in sport and exercise science research. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, 29(2), 146–151. <https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.2021-0028>



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