

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY AS A SPECIALIZED OCCUPATION

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In this paper, we attempt to answer the question of whether the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity is a specialized application field and different from others, such as clinical, educational or health psychology. Once this question is justified, we present a brief historical perspective of its development in Spain and describe the basic elements that demonstrate its consolidation, such as the existence of organizations and of specific training offers, as in the case of the Spanish Psychological Association, the common presence of professionals in this field of action, or the existence of specialized papers, texts and publications, some of high level and scientific recognition. We conclude highlighting some future challenges as a specialized field of application of psychological science.

Key words: Sport psychology, Specialization, Professional competences

En este trabajo se intenta responder a la cuestión de si la Psicología de la Actividad Física y el Deporte es un campo de aplicación especializado y diferente de otros, como la psicología clínica, educativa o de la salud. Una vez justificado y partiendo de un breve recorrido histórico de su evolución en España, se describen los elementos fundamentales que evidencian su consolidación, como la existencia de organizaciones y de ofertas formativas específicas –caso del Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos–, la presencia habitual de profesionales en este campo de actuación, o la existencia de documentación, textos y publicaciones especializados, algunas de gran nivel y reconocimiento científico. Se concluye indicando algunos de los retos de futuro que se nos plantea como campo de aplicación especializado de la ciencia psicológica.

Palabras clave: Psicología del deporte, Especialización, Competencias profesionales

Is Sport Psychology, a term that includes physical exercise, a sufficiently particular field of human activity to be able to establish a professional action pattern that is different from other areas of Psychology? We will attempt to answer this question.

In order to successfully approach this consideration and the current analysis of sport psychology and physical exercise, it is first necessary to define it precisely. We begin with the premise that sport psychology does not constitute an area of knowledge within psychological science but that it is a field of professional activity. What characterizes this discipline is its orientation applied to a facet of human activity such as sports in the wider meaning of the term. Therefore, it refers to the intervention area of an applied activity for which it is convenient to develop a specific technology including assessment instruments, intervention programs and specific direct and indirect techniques. Thus, the first step to answering the question concerning professional identity is to establish to what extent it is determined by the existence of a social

area sufficiently different from all others to understand it as being specific and differentiated. In this regard, there is no doubt that sport has characteristics clearly differentiated from any other human activity, such as, for example, business, teaching, the driving of vehicles, or the prevention of catastrophes, to mention but a few. Accordingly, and following Weinberg and Gould (1996): Sport Psychology is an area of applied psychology focused on the scientific study of people and their behavior in the context of sports and physical exercise. Thus, given that sport is a differentiated human activity, we can ask ourselves if that entails a differentiated professional exercise, as well, or at least as much as any of those already traditionally recognized as being specialized.

It is hardly necessary to enlarge on this to clearly establish that sport is a human activity differentiated from others. Appealing to the most usual definitions and differentiating sport from exercise, we can state that sport is considered to be all activity characterized by having physical requirements, being institutionalized (federations, clubs), requiring competition alone or with others and having a set of perfectly defined rules. On the other hand, physical activity or exercise refers to all

natural and/or planned movements made by human beings resulting in an expenditure of energy with an end to health protection, body esthetics, and rehabilitation and sport performance.

We can equally differentiate the sphere of professional Sport Psychology from other proximate fields of psychology, with which work is occasionally shared, as documented in professional profiles by the C.O.P. (1998). To begin with, we can refer to Clinical Psychology as a field of Psychological specialization that applies the principles, techniques and scientific knowledge developed for this purpose in order to assess, diagnose, treat, modify and prevent anomalies, mental disorders or behavioral problems. Thus, it is centered on the pathological and dysfunctional. However, in the sphere of sport and exercise, the work orientation is quite different; it is more focused on preparation or on psychological training and centered on the constant development of psychological skills and capacities without that implying the existence of a previous deficit (for example, an athlete trains his/her strength or velocity without previously having any pathology or deficiency, all the contrary).

Evidently, occasionally there are problems or clinical alterations in sport as in any other human activity, which also have to be dealt with. If the person who is specialized in sport psychology is also capacitated in the area of clinical psychology, he/she will be able to intervene. On the other hand, there is, at times, some confusion between the use of certain assessment instruments and intervention techniques and the consideration that clinical work is being carried out. In fact, many assessment instruments and systems do not objectively have an exclusive use in clinical psychology - although they may be used frequently and are very long-standing - but they are also efficient for obtaining information in other fields. To give a classic example, anxiety's emotional reaction as part of the basic emotional processes in all human beings can be present in very diverse contexts and, in some cases even with an adaptive functionality, regardless of the efforts to control or reduce it, given that discomfort is not desired. Other examples of intervention procedures could be relaxation strategies, systematic desensitization or cognitive restructuring. They can all be perfectly and licitly used, for example, to facilitate an optimum activation level and/or emotional state previous to an athletic start or high-jump, without there being any clinical pathology or dysfunction to be treated.

Another area that merits being differentiated from our area of psychology is Educational Psychology, whose work objective is the consideration and intervention of human behavior in educational situations through the development of the abilities of people, groups and institutions. The word educational is to be understood in its broadest sense regarding training, and personal and group development, especially in the framework of social systems dedicated to education at all its diverse levels and modalities, i.e., regulated and non-regulated systems, formal and informal systems, and throughout a person's entire life cycle (COP, 1998). With regard to this area, the fundamental differences with sport psychology can be found in the context of professional intervention and in the prevalent objectives, although there are some overlapping points, especially in some specialized fields of sport such as sport initiation where there could be a certain convergence. However, the differences in context are clear and have to do with the physical and functional space where the training activities are carried out, generally classrooms in public or private educational centers, with the exception of physical education, which is precisely the element in common with a wide variety of physical/sport activities. As regards the objectives, training is one of them but it is not the only one. Promoting health, the development of well-being and enjoyment, facilitating interpersonal relationships, being able to overcome others and oneself, or improving body image and self esteem are also important.

In this case, we also find ourselves with a dual relationship between both fields of intervention. On the one hand, in the most formal aspects, the curriculum of obligatory teaching in Spain includes Physical Education as a subject. On the other hand, extramural physical/sport activity contemplates a doubtless formative and educational facet. In both cases, the physical/sport activity is basically considered to be a means and not an end, in contrast to exercise, without being competition and all that this involves, an element neither necessary nor relevant, which is the opposite of what happens in sports.

One of the most important differences is perhaps found in relation to the area of Health Psychology, which studies both health promotion and prevention of illness and the behavior associated to these, its origin, its course and its treatment. Insofar as there is a connection between physical activity and health, certain parallelisms are established between health psychology

and exercise and sport psychology (Rodríguez-Marín, 1991; Rodríguez-Marín, 1995; Rodríguez-Marín & Neipp, 2008). Nevertheless, it is necessary to separate two very different aspects that are intermingled in this connection. In the first place, the consideration that exercise and sport are activities that are preventive and favorable to health, and in the second place, the role they play when health problems already exist. In this second case, we refer to sport as another resource to attend to and improve damaged health, generally included in the subfield of sport psychology intervention in special populations (people with diabetes, morbid obesity, cardiovascular problems, depression, etc.). With regard to the preventive relationship, it is obvious that the regular practice of exercise and sport can contribute to improving the health condition of an individual (also, worsen it when done incorrectly or if he/she has some type of injury or accident), but in the same way as eating correctly, working safely and satisfactorily, maintaining good personal relationships, having a positive and balanced state of mind, travelling safely, and many more, contribute to a person living a more satisfactory and healthy life. In other words, health is a sphere in which sport and exercise at all levels of practice is included – or should be included – not existing, then, agreement with regard to professional specialization. They are dealt with at different overlapping levels, along with many other fields of psychology application and other scientific areas. Overall, we can point out that there would not be a comparison between health psychology and sport psychology as a profession given that either it represents a subordinate relationship like that of any other ethical and socially defensible professional action, that is to say, beneficial, or it is a subfield of intervention, that of special populations, which are never exhausted as some of these differentiated groups exist due to social reasons and not due to illness (for example, the elderly, minors at risk of social exclusion, prison populations, etc.).

Based on these assertions, a series of important considerations and conclusions are derived which lead us to attempt to resolve two other fundamental questions: which group is entitled to practice this profession, and what training and capacitation should be required to practice it. In order to try to clarify both questions, we will first briefly review the history of the development of this discipline, which, although young, has grown and continues to grow in a significant way.

BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

What is most significant to highlight in the beginnings of this discipline is the great relevance of the demand from the sports environment itself. We can establish that the demand emerged before the offer. It was the athletes and coaches themselves who showed a great interest in knowing how psychological processes worked in everything related to their activity, such as learning how to control their thoughts and emotions in order to increase their level and their performance, etc. It is for this reason that the subject of sport psychology was at first given in educational centers related to sport sciences (the INEFS, National Institutes of Physical Education), for which their presence was practically nonexistent in psychology faculties, beginning their incorporation in the 1980s, usually as a second-cycle subject and being given on many occasions by the same teachers who had already given this subject in Sport Sciences Faculties. With reference to research, at first, very applied descriptive studies were carried out, seeking to answer the athletes' specific questions or problems. That applied character was maintained with the development of the discipline, but research of a basic character was developed, which strengthened the applications.

It also has to be pointed out that the direct work, carried out almost exclusively with the athletes, went on to become work with everyone pertaining to the sports environment (coaches, trainers, physical education teachers, parents, referees, people in charge of clubs, etc.) and little by little, awareness of the fundamental role played on many occasions by these became evident. Today, exercise and sport psychology has considerably opened its field of action and it is applied in many diverse spheres, from sports programs directed at improving the state of health of certain groups (people with diabetes or cardio-vascular risk, for example) to programs for developing physical/sport activities for the elderly or in early childhood.

With regard to its place within the branches of psychology, it must be pointed out that sport psychology was initially developed in the area of basic psychology and educational psychology, at least in Spain (Cantón, 1990), probably owing to a combination of intrinsic factors in this field of application, such as it being initially considered an area that was sufficiently specialized and in which aspects such as motivational, emotional and learning processes stood out, and also that it was linked to didactic, formative and human development aspects.

From there, for example, in the studies for a degree in physical education, two subjects appeared: one general basic first year course, and another related to developmental aspects. However, being a field of application, with time and with a greater development of the different subfields or intervention areas within sport psychology itself, this discipline opened up to different areas of knowledge and different focuses of psychology, from psychobiology to organizational psychology. This process ran parallel to greater specialized training, with a substantial and relevant weight of content pertinent to psychology, that, in fact, is another characteristic indicative of the current situation: a wide offer in specialized training. There are some studies that we can consult to know in greater detail the history of sport psychology at a national and international level (Cantón, 1998, 2001; Cruz & Cantón, 1992).

POSITIVE INDICATORS OF THE CONSOLIDATION OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY: A CURRENT REALITY

At the beginning of the 21st century, we can safely affirm that the area of professional intervention of exercise and sport psychology is consolidated, at least in the sense that it is recognized as much by group members of world sport as by professional, academic and public institution entities with competences in this sphere.

Classic indicators of the development of an area (Tortosa & Civera, 2001; Tortosa, Mayor & Carpintero, 1990) are aspects such as the existence of specific stable organizations, the frequent carrying out of scientific and professional meetings, and the presence of specialized communication and divulgation instruments (journals, books, web pages, etc.) These three elements are perfectly reflected in the current situation of sport psychology.

To outline the characteristic aspects that define this field of action at present, we can summarize some of the most significant positive indicators. We can begin by pointing out the growing demand on the part of social agents linked to sport (clubs, athletes, coaches, etc.), especially in the private sector, for professional intervention on psychological factors, not only in relation to sport performance (although it is the most relevant demand), but also in other areas, such as in the initial stages of learning a sport (requesting guidelines for improving motivation and learning), in the management of strategies for relating adequately to athletes' family members, or the way of increasing the satisfaction and profitability of a sport facility. Any of these aspects are already integrated

in a fairly normal way in the wide range of possibilities, contributions and scientific-technical resources of the different disciplines that intervene in sport, including Psychology

In order to arrive at the current situation, the pedagogic, formative and informative work of many professionals has been fundamental, who, step by step, have shown and demonstrated their knowledge and the rigorous systems of work employed, dispelling that initial prototypical idea that situated sport psychology almost exclusively in the area of pathologies and disorders, or in the inefficiency or incompetence of a knowledge related solely to the "profundness" of the human being but far from activities and practical needs.

A second element worthy of pointing out as a positive indicator of the profession of sport psychology is the enormous effort that has been made to develop specific, useful and valid methods, techniques and instruments. However, we must indicate that the principal increase in the production of assessment instruments has been for their utilization fundamentally in the area of research and that, although some instruments have been elaborated in Spain, most are translations of preexisting ones, usually in the English language. If we center on those that have gone through the adaptation phase taking into account the characteristics of the Spanish population, we find the number available is further reduced. If to that we add the factor that only a few are published and put on sale, the reduction is substantial. Here, a strictly commercial factor intervenes due to the fact that the area of sport psychology is proportionately small and has a limited number of potential buyers of assessment tests, which probably leads many editors not to favor their publication.

With regard to training, we can affirm that at this time there is a great offer of specialized training in the field of sport psychology that probably is on the verge of surpassing its potential demand. To this, it is worth adding the restructuring and the unknown factors opening up with the present change in university studies, that which is known as the Bologna Process. The greater part of offers at the Masters level is centralized in university centers, in psychology faculties, with the exception of the Psychology Masters in Exercise and Sport organized by the Psychology Association of the Community of Valencia, directed exclusively at psychologists and totally focused on professional practice.

Another current indicator is the quantity of organizations that are framed in the sphere of sport psychology. There

are at least two important state organizations: the *Spanish Federation of Sport Psychology Associations* (FEPD) created in 1987, and the *State Coordinator of Sport Psychology of the Spanish Psychology Association* (COP-E), formalized in 1992 and that can become a professional Division. To these, it is worth adding others of autonomous, national and international character, either specific such as the *Iberoamerican Society of Sport Psychology* (SIPD) or the *International Society of Sport Psychology* (ISSP), or as a section/division that is a part of wider psychology organizations, such as the *American Psychology Association* (APA) or the *Iberoamerican Federation of Psychology* (FIAP).

With reference to meetings, conferences and congresses, every year for the last few decades, several have been celebrated, and there is also frequent participation in sport psychology studies and research in non-specific events in the area. This panoramic of scientific and professional meetings can not only be confirmed by analyzing previous years, but also by checking the forecast of different future meetings, where in a specific manner or taking part in subject matters of the event, sport psychology is present. Furthermore, with reference to specialized publications, there are already many very relevant ones, not only in English, but also in Spanish. Among them, it is worth mentioning the *Journal of Sport Psychology*, edited uninterruptedly since 1992 and recently indexed in the relevant ISI-Thomson, or the *Notebooks on Sport Psychology*, edited by the General Administration of Sports of the Community of Murcia since 2001.

We can conclude the review of some of the indicators of the consolidation of the professional field of sport psychology by making reference to another characteristic of the development and strengthening of a discipline: the increase in its specialization, its subdivision into more specific fields. This phenomenon can be observed in the course of scarcely three decades, from those times in which speaking of sport psychology was to refer to a very specific field, to the present, in which it is already considered to be a general concept that includes other sub-specializations that are giving way to new possibilities for professional practice and leading to a greater degree of specialization. This phenomenon, related to new demands or the generation of "niche markets", is specified in the participation of sport psychologists in spheres such as the practice of exercise in special populations, for example, the elderly, individuals

with disabilities, or minors at risk of social exclusion; sports practice as an adjunct factor in treatments to improve problems and biomedical alterations (cardiovascular disorders, diabetes, obesity, etc.); the prevention and intervention of behaviors with health risks (muscle dysmorphia, anorexia, doping, etc.); or the wide range of possible interventions in the area of human resources and organizational psychology, an emerging field with strong development and a need to clearly establish the necessary competencies of the professionals (Cantón & Sánchez, 2003; Sánchez, 2006).

A LOOK AT THE FUTURE: NEW CHALLENGES

The current consolidation of our profession is patently obvious, but there is still a great deal of work left to be done. There are various new challenges to consider and we must be willing to face them, to respond in the best possible way to the requirements and demands of our professional work in order to, thus, avoid or reduce some potential risks. Certainly, some of these risk factors are common to all psychology, but that does not prevent us from trying to approach them from our perspective.

Increasing the control of the efficacy and efficiency of our interventions constitutes one of the greatest challenges in our area. For this reason, establishing evaluable work objectives, objectifying the information to the maximum, utilizing adequate instruments, verifying possible limitations a priori, and regulating expectations about the effects of our work is essential. We must always offer valid, exact and reliable information. If we really wish to be well considered professionals, we must show unambiguously what we can do and everything that has already been achieved, without appealing to any subjective factors of faith or belief in our work so that our client can clearly confirm, and without leaving room for interpretation, the results of our professional activity. We are aware that the task of advancing in objectification is common throughout the science of psychology and can only be attained by continuing to develop work methods that are increasingly more precise and accurate. It is necessary to continue creating valid, reliable assessment instruments or procedures and to improve those already in existence; to continue making an effort to delimit our area of knowledge clearly and conceptually, seeking scientific consensus in our terms and concepts, something necessary so that every professional who works with a specific human psychological aspect is doing similar work. Without this, it is difficult to benefit from some of the

advantages of science: the accumulation of knowledge, the possibility of response and the verification/ruling out of a hypothesis.

Another important challenge to be considered in our area is to continue improving our training and capacitation for professional practice, which from my point of view, implies optimizing three elements: increase and update training, be capable of integrating our scientific knowledge with professional practice, and develop personal abilities or capacities involved in effective professional practice.

Although we would have to differentiate between what is training for professional practice and the logical right to knowledge that any person has, training in sport psychology must have a solid and consistent fundamental base of psychological knowledge; from there stems the critical position that I share about the training offer open to a student body that does not possess that base. Thus, it would be convenient that, at least formally, distinctions about their different degrees of knowledge and the different abilities of each one be established so that confusion and ambiguity is not generated, that those who do not have specific academic training be prevented from arriving at the conclusion that they can carry out the functions of a psychologist, and also that potential clients not be confounded, who, in the end, are those that can suffer the consequences of an intervention by an unqualified practitioner. Working on this base, specific knowledge of sport psychology can be implemented with a fundamentally technological and applied focus, centered on the different spheres and subspecialties that make up this field of intervention. To this, some basic knowledge of the area of intervention itself must be added (medicine, training theory, sport legislation, etc.) as the professional work is usually carried out in multidisciplinary collaboration. Obviously, this general model is susceptible to improvement and adjustment, although it has shown its efficacy in some cases, such as in the training at a Masters level offered by the Official Psychology Association of the Community of Valencia that followed this model, without discrediting the doubtless quality of other existing postgraduate training offers in our country.

On the other hand, specialized training should not conclude with the taking of a postgraduate course, however good this may be, but it requires constant updating, resorting to the large variety of information sources available, especially specialized journals, to the

participation in forums and scientific-professional conferences or to the taking of short-term courses adapted to the specific demands of daily professional practice and, therefore, having a greater degree of specificity.

The integration of scientific knowledge into professional practice is a constant need, not free from a certain polemic and controversy throughout the history of our discipline, exemplified in its beginnings in the classic work of R. Martens (1979) in which he posed a certain dilemma between laboratory research and field work. Fortunately, nowadays this is no longer a motive for controversy. Professionals increasingly turn to journals and specialized texts, and attend congresses and scientific forums to update their training and knowledge. Likewise, field research centered on the purely professional is carried out: work methods, assessment instruments, intervention results, etc., to the point that many scientific publications already include some specific section dedicated to presenting the scientific professional community with studies made from this second perspective.

Another factor to be taken into account and that is often overlooked is the development of personal abilities, that is, of all those skills that, not being part of any higher learning curriculum, are of great importance and impact on professional practice. We are referring to aspects such as the development and improvement of our social skills and communication, our ability to empathize, our ability to concentrate, or to adequately apply emotional self-control, as well as other formal personal facets such as the ability to organize time well, seriousness in adapting appointments and timetables, punctuality, cleanliness and correctness in the presentation of reports, among many others.

In that concerning the requirements for professional practice, we are living at a time of transition caused by changes and adaptations to the European space for higher university education and training, for which some current criteria and conditions will probably be affected. From the onset, it seems that the requirements for a psychology professional will continue to be a Degree in Psychology, although, as we will discuss later, there are doubts and risks linked to postgraduate organization and to the specialties, which could affect our area of application. Having clarified this, we can indicate some requirements that, though not being formal, are, to the best of my judgment, more than recommendable for complying with good professional practice. To begin with,

it is important to increase and update training, as much in content as in work procedures and systems or assessment techniques. Neither would it be unreasonable to consider some system that would oblige retraining, once the title of specialty certification is obtained, as is done in other countries.

One of the essential requirements for professional practice is the total adaptation to the regulations and criteria established in the deontological code. Beyond fulfilling the function of ethical and/or legal norms, deontological aspects act as an authentic guide for our work, indicating and exemplifying ways of acting which also lead to showing our capacitation, rigor, seriousness and efficacy in practice, and that additionally fulfill a human and social purpose (Bermejo, 2008).

Finally, the continuous advancement of our discipline toward new subfields of application and to the development of subspecialties will require an effort for the adaptation of our training and our professional capacities, in order to demonstrate, without a doubt, the adequacy and utility of our professional practice in free competition with other professionals with whom we surely must share but also delimit the diverse functions and areas of work.

A common risk in any field of application is that, being socially defined by the specific human tasks and activities that are performed (such as the areas of judicial, labor, or military psychology, etc.), their work can be done from different areas of knowledge. In addition, on many occasions, the demand requires interdisciplinary collaboration, establishing overlapping spaces in which the detailed and differentiated definition of each professional role is not always clear. For example, if we are referring to sport performance, it is obvious that we can approach it from different disciplines: physical education, medicine, biomechanics, nursing, etc. and clearly psychology, as well as proposing its assessment and/or intervention in an interdisciplinary way (León & Cantón, 2008).

The difficulties in establishing a professional role are increased by the self-interests, not always licit, of people who assume the tasks of the sport psychologist, that is to say, the problem of infiltration, when it is not pure and simple deceit, by some "characters" claiming to act in "mental or spiritual" states.

As we have seen, risks are intrinsic to any human activity and do not have to suppose a restraint, a limitation, or much less, lead to resignation or the abandonment of

tasks. Sometimes, the existence of risks acts as a propellant that leads us to improving our strategies, to controlling what we do more adequately and to making more of an effort to change these risks into an opportunity for improvement, into a challenge. Nevertheless, to be able to give them a positive focus, it is necessary to know them as well as possible, without self-deception or complacencies that take us nowhere.

One of the possible answers to these specified risks consists in objectifying the professional role in our area to the maximum, as already done in a first approach to the question by the Official Association of Spanish Psychologists (COP) (1998), establishing spheres or areas of professional action (Table 1) as well as the functions to be performed (Table 2). These last are common to all psychological science, although specified and adapted to

TABLE 1
SPHERES OF PROFESSIONAL ACTION IN SPORT PSYCHOLOGY
(COP, 1998; 2006)

Sphere of Action (COP, 1998)	Sphere of Action (COP, 2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High-performance sport ✓ Base or initiation sport ✓ Leisure, health and free time sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ High-performance sport ✓ Base and early initiation sport ✓ Leisure and free time ✓ Special populations ✓ Sports organizations

TABLE 2
FUNCTIONS TO PERFORM IN SPORT PSYCHOLOGY (COP, 1998)

ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tests and questionnaires ✓ Interviews ✓ Techniques and procedures for self-observation and self-recording ✓ Observation recording ✓ Psychophysiological recording
ASSESSMENT PLANNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Psychological variables ✓ Performance and/or conduct ✓ Adherence to activity ✓ Attainment of objectives ✓ Social skills
INTERVENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Direct: psychological training ✓ Indirect: design and application of psychological strategies
EDUCATION AND/OR TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regulated activities: Courses for coaches, postgraduate courses ✓ Non-regulated activities: conferences, matches
RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Basic ✓ Applied

the characteristics of the area. The spheres of work were modified at a meeting organized by the COP in Valencia in 2006, highlighting the apparent “disappearance” of the sphere of health and sport psychology, as it was considered that all and each of the intervention areas should be focused in a healthy way.

As has been described in other places (Cantón, 1996; 2003; León & Cantón, 2008), the delimitation of professional performance can be completed by addressing those joint multi or interdisciplinary collaborative work tasks, in which the contributions of the specialists in sport sciences are necessary to achieve the objectives in an effective and efficient way.

In conclusion, mention must be made of an important objective that is appearing on the temporal horizon and that will directly affect our profession: the creation of professional divisions and the subsequent accreditation process or acknowledgment of the specialty by the Council of Official Spanish Psychology Associations. The same as its homonymous North American organization, the A.P.A. (which created Division 47 of sport psychology in 1986) and at a time when university training seems to be reduced to postgraduate courses with a wide range of specialties accessible to students with different training, the creation of professional Divisions with criteria to enable the accreditation of specializations, support the training of experts and develop the role of the professional, will doubtlessly contribute to the benefit of our group, and society in general, promoting the idea that people who require our services can find trained, competent and committed professionals with deontological ethics.

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