

Exploring the Relationship Between Engaging in Prosociality and Collegiate Athletes' Well-Being During the Transition to Retirement



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INTRODUCTION

- Most collegiate athletes will retire. During this transition, many struggle with loss, sadness, and anxiety.
- Past work aimed at helping athletes during retirement offers *inward looking* strategies, such as pre-retirement planning.
- Research shows that prosocial action leads to greater well-being (Aknin & Whillans, 2020) even in difficult times, suggesting that prosociality could assist athletes during retirement.



Preregistered Hypothesis:

Retired athletes who report engaging in more prosocial behavior during their retirement transition will also report greater psychological well-being during this period.

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS



261 retired collegiate athletes from the United States & Canada

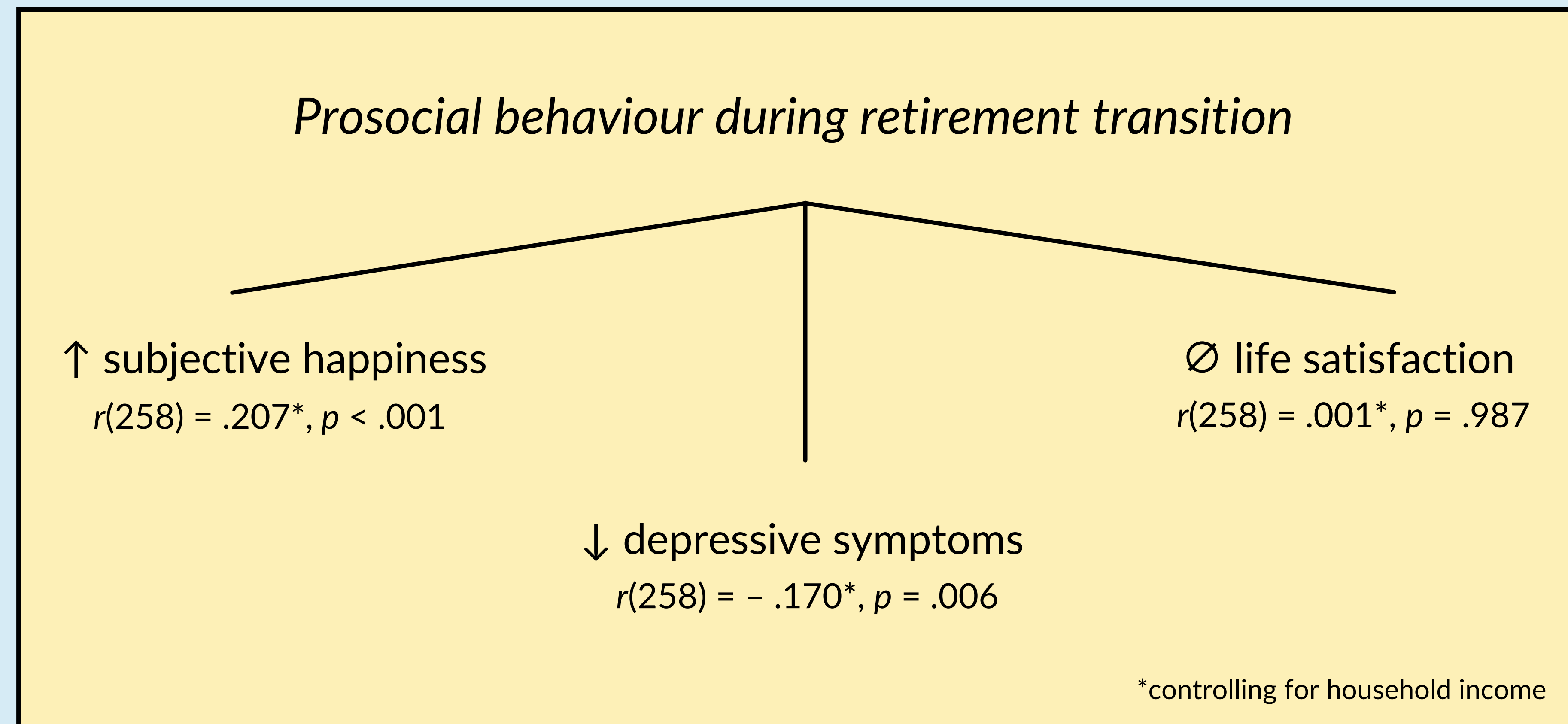
- *Age*: 31.08
- 56% men, 29% women, 0.4% self-defined, 14.6% did not respond

PROCEDURE

In an online survey, participants were asked to:

- 1) Describe their retirement experience
- 2) Complete validated measures to capture psychological well-being during transition
- 3) Report on prosocial and other behaviours during transition

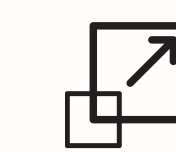
Prosocial behavior is associated with greater happiness and lower depressive symptoms during a salient life transition—retirement from collegiate sport.



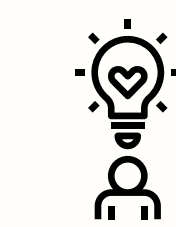
RESULTS

- Consistent with predictions, prosocial behaviour was positively associated with subjective happiness & negatively associated with depressive symptoms (with and without controlling for household income).
 - However, life satisfaction was not significantly associated with life satisfaction.
- Within sport prosocial behaviours ($r(258) = .200, p = .001$) were more strongly associated with subjective happiness in comparison to out of sport prosocial behaviours ($r(258) = .142, p = .022$), controlling for household income.

DISCUSSION



These findings support an **extension to our understanding of the robust relationship between prosociality and well-being**—evident in the life transition of collegiate sport retirement.



This suggests that **prosociality's well-being benefits may also occur during other stressful circumstances.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Lara B. Aknin
Tiara A. Cash

REFERENCES

Aknin, L. B., & Whillans, A. V. (2020). Helping and happiness: A review and guide for public policy. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 1-32.

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