

## Abstract

The Centre of Advanced Training (CAT) is a Government funded initiative to train young dancers aged 10-18 years, who show exceptional potential in dance. Laban is conducting longitudinal research to monitor changes in dancers physical and psychological well-being over two and a half years. One aspect of physical screening includes assessment of joint hypermobility because of its prevalence within the dance community. Each CAT dancer was assessed for generalised joint hypermobility using the Beighton Score, and then for the symptomatic Joint Hypermobility Syndrome (JHS) using the Brighton Criteria. Seventy-nine dancers with a mean age of 15.7 years were diagnosed with JHS on the basis of the Brighton Criteria. The aim of the study was to investigate whether there were strength and psychological differences between JHS and non-JHS dancers and specifically between injured and non-injured JHS dancers that could explain why some JHS dancers remain uninjured.

The group took part in all aspects of the physical screening including a hand-grip strength test, and a psychological questionnaire encompassing somatic anxiety, worry, concentration, and perfectionism. The JHS cohort was split into injured and non-injured cohorts according to a positive response to the question 'are you presently injured?' Independent T-Tests were conducted using SPSS.

There were significant differences in the strength and perfectionism scores between JHS and non-JHS dancers, with the JHS cohort showing greater overall strength and perfectionism. The results showed no significant differences between the injured and non-injured JHS cohorts in the hand-grip strength test or in the anxiety or perfectionism questionnaires.

The study shows that further research is warranted in the link between JHS dancers and perfectionism. Qualitative and observational research might improve our understanding into why some JHS dancers remain uninjured through observing their postures and behaviour.