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Recent studies indicate a decline in mental health among students in general, with increased reports of stress, anxiety symptoms, and feelings of loneliness. Specifically, findings show that music and arts students in Norway experience higher levels of anxiety and depression symptoms compared to the general student population. In response to students' demand for tools to manage these challenges and to lay the foundation for a sustainable career, we have initiated the "Physical Training for Music Students" project. Previous studies have shown that tailored training programs can have a positive effect on preventing overuse injuries in musicians, but there is a need for more research on training as a preventive measure in this field. The project is part of the work of Createme (Centre for Excellence in Creative Use of Technology in Music Education) at the University of Agder (UiA).

The main goal of the project is to investigate how music students perceive regular training interventions to impact their musical performance and reduce the risk of overuse injuries. An additional aim is to document that regular physical training can positively affect students' physical and mental health and potentially enhance their musical performance.

Methodologically, the project involves a group of 12 music students from the bachelor's/master's program in performing rhythmic music at the university. The students have followed a tailored training program over eight weeks. At the start of the project and after the intervention period, the students undertook physical tests to measure physical fitness, completed validated questionnaires on physical and mental health, and self-evaluation forms related to their musical performance. Additionally, the students participated in an introductory course on basic anatomy, recovery, and nutrition intake. The training program included three weekly training sessions.

The data is now being analyzed and will be published in a relevant journal. The experiences and knowledge from the project will also be included as teaching material in an upcoming 5-credit course on Musician's Health, being developed as part of work package 5, Responsible Education, within Createme. The project is led by Gunn-Hilde Erstad Haugen and Hege Bjørnestøl Beckmann from Createme/UiA, along with project partners Matthew Spencer and Per Thomas Byrkjedal from the Department of Sport Science and Physical Education at UiA.