Fears: sub-theme distrust of health professionals
Several participants commented on the lack of specialist knowledge of health professionals
Participants believe:
- Health professionals do not understand the unique needs of a musician, and especially, the traditional musician
- Health professionals will tell them to stop playing
- An intervention could do more harm than good
- There are no clearly identified health professionals that specialise in PRMDs
- There is a lack of support for musicians with PRMDs

Stresses contributing to PRMDs
Physical

- Playing environment
- Setting is not designed for performance (often pubs, bars)
- Playing often happens at night, and can last for several hours (especially sessions)
- Although the setting may be unsuitable, there is a reluctance to disturb the session or draw attention to themselves (and thus away from the music by asking for more space or bringing the issue to everyone’s attention)

“*You could be crammed into a corner of a pub and you do find that it is sometimes across the basis*” (Participant 11)

Postural issues
- Pressure for students to leave the lesson having mastered new techniques very quickly
- Little agreement on the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to play the instrument
- Lack of emphasis on posture when learning, and PRMDs are an integral part of being a traditional musician

“*Ornaments are musical embellishments, often quite complex, that are added to the basic melodic line. Sometimes they can be seen as a block there where you know that – you know that you have something to do but they might tell you to stop playing for a for a minute and a half and you can’t afford to do that because they’re slots tick-tocking or playing. And people like are doing it as a past-time a lot of the time don’t want to give it up for some reason either because I suppose a lot of them it’s their outlet for enjoyment and I think that that could be something to do with it. I know it’s just that they don’t want to be actually told that they have to stop.*” (Participant 11)

The way the music is taught

Traditional music is taught differently to classical features that relate to PRMDs are:
- Class area (Belfast is often 1:1, traditional can be up to 30 students)
- Coping the teacher’s posture and technique
- Lack of emphasis on posture when learning, and the difficulty of teaching this in a large class
- Many musicians are self-taught
- Little agreement on the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to play the instrument
- Pressure for students to leave the lesson having learned a tune (classical musicians may work on one piece for weeks)

“In the teacher just said ‘just do the full-up there – that’s your bow, work away’” (Participant 8)

The way the music is taught

(‘Yes we have to play up to speed. This is the faster [in the music]. It is the pressure that you are trying to get like your own music? – ‘Yes, you have to. We give a sort of note of getting everything in there. Whereas if you go slower, you would be at a disadvantage’)

References

**Why?**

Because being a musician requires dedication, desire and discipline [8], and encompasses a sense of identity, a place in the musical community as well as an income and way of life.

**Discussion**

In order to be successful, musicians must have:
- Physical and mental strength
- Endurance
- Manual dexterity
- Good hand-eye coordination
- Ability to play repetitively and rapidly, day after day, and year after year [5, 6]

A successful musician and a successful athlete, will each have these same qualities.

**Why is there such discrepancy in the management of their injuries?**

All participants either had one or more PRMD or knew of someone with a PRMD
Irish traditional musicians consider themselves, their music and their musical culture as different to other musicians e.g. classical
Despite being aware of problems such as sitting etc., participating in music was more important than their pain and discomfort

**Take home messages**

Musicians have a high prevalence of PRMDs
Irish traditional musicians identified specific issues and stresses within their culture that were associated with PRMDs
Not all musicians are the same – there are different musical cultures as well as different musical environments
Health professionals must understand the musculoskeletal and performance demands of each musician, in order to provide help

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