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The Comparison between athlete women and non athlete women regarding to mental health and happiness

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of this study was to compare general health and happiness in women who corporate in exercise activities with who no corporate. Research method was quasi with control group. In so doing, 720 subjects who were first time corporate in exercise randomly selected. Measurement devises were Goldberg's general health questionnaire and Oxford's happiness questionnaire. Data analyzed by T test. Results showed that exercises practice lead decrease to anxiety, depression and could improve bodily signs. Also, positive emotion and satisfy of life in corporate people were higher than no corporate.

Key words: athlete, happiness, mental health, women .

INTRODUCTION

Physical activity has been associated with numerous benefits that extend to mental health. However, there is a growing body of evidence [16, 20, 14] focusing in particular on exercise, to suggest that the biochemical changes induced with exercise include many of the same systems involved in psychiatric illnesses such as depression and anxiety disorder. Regular physical activity is one of the most important things offers numerous health benefits. Research has demonstrated that virtually all individuals can benefit from regular physical activity, whether they participate in vigorous exercise or some type of moderate health-enhancing physical activity [16, 19, 17]. Many studies suggested regular physical activity is seen as one of the most effective procedures for promoting quality of life in any population [10, 15, 7].

Regular physical activity, mental health and happiness connected with each other. Mental health is a state in which people are able to have activities in the society easily and their progress and achievements would be joyful for them.

Seligman [25] provides the acronym PERMA to summarize Positive Psychology's correlational findings: humans seem happiest when they have:

1. *Pleasure* (tasty foods, warm baths, etc.),
2. *Engagement* (or flow, the absorption of an enjoyed yet challenging activity),
3. *Relationships* (social ties have turned out to be extremely reliable indicator of happiness),
4. *Meaning* (a perceived quest or belonging to something bigger), and
5. *Accomplishments* (having realized tangible goals).

According to [3] happiness is consisted of three components: positive excitement, life satisfaction and the absence of negative excitements such as depression and stress. Regarding the relationship between exercise and mental health, it was previously believed that sport activities are useful for physical health. Today, this point is clear that exercise not only is useful for physical health, but also for mental health as well.

Many studies have shown [23, 6, and 11] that there is a significant and positive correlation between extroversion and behavioral activating system.

Schwartz and Strach [24] believe that happy people are those who have bias towards optimism and cheerfulness, i.e. they process the information in a way that results in their happiness. And because psychological variables as positive cognition, social commitment, positive mood, life control feelings, physical health, self-satisfaction and mental awareness are considered happiness components, so happiness and regular physical activities have an important role in mental health [3, 10, 12, and 18].

The aim of the present research is to compare between athlete females and non-athlete females regarding to mental health and happiness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Statistical population of this study is comprised of all athlete and non athlete women of Uremia city in 2010. Athletes and non-athletes females (simple size was 360 participants for each group, total 720 participants) were selected randomly and GHQ, OHT questionnaires completed by them.

Measures

General health questionnaire (GHQ): The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) is a measure of current mental health and since its development by Goldberg in the 1970s it has been extensively used in different settings and different cultures. The questionnaire was originally developed as a 60-item instrument but at present a range of shortened versions of the questionnaire including the GHQ-30, the GHQ-28, the GHQ-20, and the GHQ-12 is available. The scale asks whether the respondent has experienced a particular symptom or behavior recently. It serves as a self-administered tool for assessment of general mental health and mental distress in four areas of depression, anxiety, somatic symptoms, and social dysfunction. GHQ-28 asks about the presence of a range of symptoms during the past month in four relevant areas. Responses are evaluated on 4-point likert scale ranging from 0 ('not at all') to 3 ('much more than usual'). The higher the score, the lower the well-being reported.

Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI). This draft is provided by Argyle and Lu [2] this inventory has 29 items, that subjects respond on the basis of applying each one of items for him/her, and determines his/her response on the basis of a 4 degrees scale from 1 to 4 from validity viewpoint, the validity of Oxford happiness inventory in Noorbala research [22] on 25 students, Cronbach's Alpha 0.93 was obtained which is higher in comparison with other researches. [1, 9, 8] also obtained Alpha 0.90, 0.87, 0.89 and 0.90 respectively [22].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 frequencies distribution of subject's personal characteristic

Group	statistics	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Athlete	height	156	176	167.5	6.7
	weight	42	85	67.3	9.8
	age	27	51	34.7	8.8
Non athlete	height	153	178	165.3	7.7
	weight	48	88	68.2	10.8
	Age	24	56	38.7	8.5

Table 2 Descriptive results of GHQ and its components

statistics	index	mean	SD	SD.E
Athlete	Body problems	18.91	3.28	0.435
	Anxiety	17.35	4.64	0.845
	Social performance	20.69	4.53	0.879
	Depression	15.76	5.18	0.988
	General health	72.63	14.16	1.004
Non athlete	Body problems	17.63	4.66	0.723
	Anxiety	15.93	5.21	0.562
	Social performance	20.32	3.96	0.844
	Depression	15.56	3.23	0.899
	General health	70.44	13.12	0.873

Minimum of height athletes is 156cm and maximum is 176cm and mean is 167.5; Minimum of weight athletes is 42kg, and maximum is 85kg and mean is 67.3; minimum of athletes age is 27, maximum, 51 and mean is 34.7.

Minimum of height non athletes is 153cm and maximum is 178cm and mean is 165.3; Minimum of weight athletes is 48kg, and maximum is 88kg and mean is 68.2; minimum of non athletes age is 24, maximum, 56 and mean is 38.7.

As seen in the table 2, there is difference between athlete and non athlete.

Table 3 results of t test for female athlete and non athlete in general health components

statistics	index	mean	df	t	Sig.
Athlete	Body problems	18.91	718	1.863	0.032*
	Anxiety	17.35	718	1.862	0.045*
	Social performance	20.69	718	2.653	0.67
	Depression	15.76	718	1.68	0.041*
	General health	72.64	718	2.53	0.057
Non athlete	Body problems	15.93	718	1.862	0.045*
	Anxiety	17.63	718	1.863	0.032*
	Social performance	20.32	718	2.653	0.67
	Depression	15.56	718	1.68	0.041*
	General health	70.44	718	2.53	0.057

* Difference is significant at level 0.05

As seen in table 3, there is significant difference between athlete and non athlete females in body problems, anxiety and depression.

Table 4 results of t test for female athlete and non athlete in happiness components

statistics	index	mean	df	t	Sig.
Athlete	Positive emotion	45.426	718	1.32	0.032*
	Negative emotion	5.567	718	2.32	0.56
	satisfaction	32.213	718	1.11	0.043*
	Happiness	83.206	718	0.89	0.021*
Non athlete	Positive emotion	38.765	718	1.32	0.032*
	Negative emotion	4.746	718	2.32	0.56
	satisfaction	29.767	718	1.11	0.043*
	Happiness	73.278	718	0.89	0.021*

* Difference is significant at level 0.05

As seen in table 4, there is significant difference between athlete and non athlete females in positive emotion, satisfaction and happiness.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted by the aim of comparing mental health and happiness in both female athletes and non athletes. On the basis of this research, findings relate to mental health showed that there is a significant difference between two groups in body problems, anxiety and depression. Non athlete females show more body problems, anxiety and depression in comparison with athlete females.

The results of this research conform with [16, 20, 14]. These researches showed that physical activity lead decrease to anxiety and depression.

Mansoori and Esmaili [21] show that there is a relationship between happiness and mental health Gray [12] admitted that it has a relationship with positive emotions as happiness, hope and joy.

[18] also found that a meaningful difference exists in mental health of athlete and non-athlete employed people. It is obvious that increased self-confidence creates changes in their social relationships and these changes favor the mental health. One model is the effect of body activities on mental health and is called biological model. This model says that biochemical and biological changes induced by sport activities cause mental health.

The results of research [15] point that resilience has positive correlation with sport achievement and psychological well-being, and negative correlation with psychological distress.

Sport has a lot of benefits for physical and mental life. Sport participation is the only type of physical activity inversely associated with both stress and distress. Sport participation related to less distress in unemployed mid-aged adults, and to less stress in unemployed women, unemployed young adults, and young adults with blue-collar jobs[4]. The lack of regular physical activity is linked to an increased rate of obesity, development of chronic diseases, and an overall decline in health [7]. Sport can help men with serious mental illness by providing resources which enable participants to re-story aspects of their lives through creating and sharing personal stories through which they rebuilt or maintained a positive sense of self and identity [5]. Master athletes enjoyed their participation were committed, had high perceptions of ability and belonging, and were predominantly intrinsically motivated [13].

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