

SPORT AND MENTAL HEALTH LEVEL AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract. *Purpose:* study of mental health level of university student, athletes and non-athletes. *Material:* The tested group consisted of 160 male and female undergraduates from Ouargla University, Algeria; 80 students-athletes from Institute of Physical Education and Sports and 80 students-non-athletes from Department of Psychology, English and Mathematics. In the study we used health mental scale, adapted by Diab (2006) to Arab version scale, formed from five dimensions (Competence and self-confidence, Capacity for social interaction, Emotional maturity, Freedom from neurotic symptoms, self rating and aspects of natural deficiencies). *Results:* the findings indicated that university students have high level of mental health. And the mean of the responses of students-athletes group by mental health scale reached ($M = 32.40$), with standard deviation ($STD = 5.83$), while the mean of the responses of students-non athletes group by mental health scale has reached ($M=27.47$), with standard deviation ($STD=7.88$). T-value, required to know significance of differences between means of students-athletes and students-non athletes has reached ($T=4.51$), ($DF=185$, $p < 0.01$). So there are significant statistical differences between student athletes and non-athletes in their responses by mental health scale in favor of the student athletes. *Conclusion:* sports are beneficial in respect to mental health among university students and emphasizing the importance of the mental health of university students through its integration in the various recreational and competitive activities. Future qualitative research, covering multi-variables' tests on mental health and others psychological characteristics could be performed in sports area.

Key words: mental health, sports, university students.

Introduction

Although it has been known for some time that physical exercises are good for physical health, it is within the past decade, that it has become commonplace to read in magazines and health newsletters that exercises can also be valuable in promoting sound psychological health. This optimistic appraisal has attracted a great deal of attention among public. However, for the most part, scientific community has been much more cautions in offering such unsubstantiated endorsement. Until recent time, assessment of the research literature on psychological outcomes associated with exercise, such as reduced anxiety and depression, current state have been equivocal. (Landers & Arent, 2001)

Ninety-five percents of college counseling center directors said that the number of students with significant psychological problems is of growing concern in their centers or campus, according to the latest Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors survey of counseling center directors. Seventy percents of directors believe that the number of students with severe psychological problems in their campuses has increased in the past year (Directors report that 21 % of counseling center students had severe mental health problems, while another 40 % had mild mental health problems). (AUCCCD, 2013)

People have regular tendency to do so, because it gives them an enormous sense of well-being. They feel more energetic throughout the day, sleep better at night, have sharper memory, and feel more relaxed and positive about themselves and their lives. And it's also powerful medicine for many common mental health challenges. Most previous researches do conclude that sports, physical activity and exercises do have beneficial effects on general mental health. Within higher education environment, it is surprising that little research has explored the potential benefits of sports in a cohort of individuals who are at risk of mental health problems, i.e., university students. Of the few studies that have been conducted, Van Raalte et al. (2015) referred that viewing the www.SupportForSport.org site resulted in enhanced mental health referral knowledge and efficacy relative to a control group. Results suggest that tailored on-line programming can affect outcomes for student-athletes across geographic region and resource availability levels. Tyson et al. (2010) conducted a study on physical activity and mental health in student population. Results indicated that significant differences were observed between the low, medium and high exercise groups on the mental health scales, indicating better mental health for those, who engaged in more intensive exercises' practicing. Whilst Ahmadi et al. (2002) reported that engaging in body building and swimming reduced scores on the beck Depression Inventory in female students, other searcher Toskovic (2001) found that students engaging in dynamic Taekwondo also reported lower levels of depression than in control group.

The purpose of study

Taking into account the evidence to suggest that sports are beneficial for mental health, and that university students are at elevated risk of such problems, the following study sought to investigate the impact of sports on mental health level among university students.

For the purpose of this study, the research study questions were as follows:

SQ1. What's the level of health mental among university students?

SQ2. Are there significant differences in the level of mental health between student athletes and non-athletes?

The Hypotheses

HY1. There is high level of mental health among university students.

HY2. There are significant differences in the level of mental health between student athletes and non-athletes.

Material and methods

Participants

The sample of study consisted of 160 male and female undergraduates students from Ouargla University Algeria; 80 students' athletes from Institute of Physical Education and Sports and 80 students' non-athletes from Department of Psychology, English and Mathematics (figure.1). Participants were selected randomly.

Institute (department) class	Student athletes	Student non-athletes		
	Institute of physical educational	Psychology	English	Mathematics
The first	20	7	7	6
The second	30	10	10	10
The third	30	10	10	10
Total	80	80		

Figure.1. Distribution the members of sample

Tool

In this study, Scale of Mental Health was used to collect data. adapted by Diab (2006) to Arab version, scale formed from five dimensions (Competence and self-confidence, Capacity for social interaction, Emotional maturity, Freedom from neurotic symptoms, self-rating and aspects of natural deficiencies).

To ensure the psychometric properties of the scale, it has been applied on 30 students; as the value of validity scale (T= 7.91) level of significance (0.01). The reliability was done, the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal to (0.67) and the value of Spearman- Brown coefficient equal to (0.87).

Data analysis

Data analysis was carried out with the help of statistical packet for social sciences (SPSS) 20.00 software program. The results were presented as descriptive statistics. Regarding the correct tool, there is in front of each item estimate balance consists of one degree, where the "no" give (0) and "Yes" to give (1).

Results

In this section, the findings obtained from the data analysis related Sports and mental health level among university students are given in detail. Findings concerning the level of mental health among university students are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Distribution percentages for members of sample on the mental health scale

Level of mental health	Repetition	percentage
High level	136	85%
Low level	24	15%
Total	160	100%

In table 1, the number of students with high mental health has reached (s= 136), percentage (85%). While the number of students with low mental health has reached (s=24), percentage (15%). Thus, we can conclude that the level of mental health among students is high.

In table 2, mean values of students-athletes group's responses by mental health scale has reached (M = 32.40), with standard deviation (STD=5.83), while the mean values of students-non athletes group's responses by mental health scale has reached (M=27.47), with standard deviation (STD=7.88). T -value (to know significance

of differences between means of group student athletes and group students' athletes) has reached ($T=4.51$), ($DF=185$, $p < 0.01$). So, there are significant statistical differences between students-athletes and non-athletes in their responses by mental health scale in favor of students-athletes.

Table 2. Significance of differences in the mental health level of the tested sample

Sample	N	M	Std	T Calculated	DF	Sig
Student-athletes	80	32.40	5.83	4.51	158	yes
Student –non athletes	80	27.47	7.88			

0.01

Discussion

The study, which was carried out in order to determine the level of mental health among students, revealed some important information, findings, and results. As results of this study, it was concluded that the students in university had high level of mental health.

This study differs from most previous studies, except the work of Samin (2012), who showed that there was high personal compatibility among university students. This difference exists due to nature of the mentioned studies' goals as well as different characteristics of the samples in their sex, age, and cultural/social background. Based on the above, and the result of our findings of the first hypothesis, it is clear that there are factors helping students, such as social conditions, stable economic and situations, making them to feel self-importance as well as enabling them to cope with the psychological effects of life difficulties that might pass out during the study. These factors contribute to the sharp rise in the degree of psychological and social compatibility, and represent a kind of moral support, stimulating students' abilities to cope with various difficulties. Ganellen et al. (1984) referred that these factors mitigate the impact pressure on the individual, and strengthen psychological sources, and increase individual's sense of value and importance.

Basing on results we concluded that there were significant differences between students-athletes and students-non athletes in level of mental health. Perhaps sports activities affect the various aspects of personality and growth, and also develop some life needs of students, thus influencing on their behavior and personality. For example, opportunity for social interaction (Crone et al.2005), psycho-social, such as positive emotional experiences (Carless and Douglass, 2004; Carless & Sparkes, 2008; Crone, 2007), sense of achievement (Fogarty and Happell,2005) and improvements in general mental wellbeing (Laforge et al., 2002), are positively influenced on by sport activity as well as moderate depression (Craft, 2005; Craft & Perna, 2004) and anxiety (Biddle & Mutrie, 2001). Sports activity promotes self-confidence Larry (1983) referred that physical exercises let college men to be more satisfied, more outgoing, sociable and confident.

Conclusion

Finally, there is high level of mental health among university students in University Ouargla, and there are significant differences between students-athletes and students-non athletes. Thus, sports have potential to be of benefit for mental health of university students and emphasize importance of the mental health of university students through its integration in the various recreational and competitive activities.

Future qualitative research, covering multi-variables' tests on mental health and others psychological characteristics could be performed in sports area.

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