

Athletes with High Mental Toughness Levels Experiencing Less Anxiety

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Abstract : Though mental toughness has long been explored in sport psychology, much of our understanding on the topic remains largely unexplored. The concept is used widely, but empirical evidence is required to fully understand the construct and its related variables. This research investigated the correlation between mental toughness and trait anxiety to determine whether mentally tough athletes generally experience more or less anxiety. A sample of 57 men (M age = 25.4 years, s=4.66) and 45 women (M age = 23.5 years, s=5.73) participated in a variety of sports were recruited, where mental toughness was measured using MTQ48. Levels of trait anxiety were assessed using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). Series of Pearson correlations between trait anxiety, overall mental toughness, and the six subscales of mental toughness showed significant ($p > .05$) relationships. As predicted, greater mental toughness was associated with less reported trait anxiety. Independent t-tests found significant differences ($p > .05$) in overall mental toughness, the mental toughness subscales or trait anxiety between men and women. More research is required to understand how mentally tough athletes experience less anxiety in comparison to those who are not as mentally tough. Our findings suggest that relationships observed in this study emphasize the need for the inclusion of trait anxiety in mental toughness interventions.

Keywords : mental toughness, trait anxiety, MTQ48, sport psychology

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