

The Impact of Continuous Exercise on Depression Levels Among Young Female Athletes in Hamadan Province, Iran

Authors : Mahboubeh Varmaziar

Abstract : Depression is a significant public health concern affecting people of all ages and genders. Physical activity has been shown to have a positive effect on mental health, particularly in alleviating symptoms of depression. This study aims to explore the impact of continuous exercise on depression levels among young female athletes in Hamadan Province, Iran. In this randomized controlled trial, 72 women aged 20 to 35 years attending sports centers in Hamadan Province were selected through convenient sampling and randomly assigned to either the control or experimental group. The experimental group participated in a continuous exercise program consisting of 20 sessions over six weeks, with each session lasting 30 minutes. In contrast, the control group maintained their usual daily activities at the sports center. Both groups completed demographic and Beck Depression Inventory questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including two-way ANOVA. The results of the two-way ANOVA, after controlling for the pre-test effect, revealed a significant difference in the mean depression scores between the control and experimental groups ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that the continuous exercise program significantly reduced depression levels in the young female athletes. The findings suggest that continuous exercise is an effective non-pharmacological intervention for reducing depression in young female athletes. Incorporating regular physical activity into treatment plans may serve as a complementary therapy alongside conventional treatments, offering a low-risk and beneficial approach to managing depression.

Keywords : depression, exercise, female athletes, young women

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