

The Effect of Sexual Assault on Sport Participation Trajectories from Adolescence through Young Adulthood

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Abstract : Objectives: Certain life change events were shown to have strong effects on physical activity-related behavior, but more research is needed to investigate the longer-term effects of different life change events on physical activity-related behaviors. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of experiencing physically or non-physically forced sexual activity on sports participation from adolescence to young adulthood. Methods: This study used the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) data. Group-based trajectory modeling was utilized to examine the effect of experiencing sexual assault on trajectories of sports participation from adolescence to young adulthood. Results: Male participants were divided into three trajectory groups (i.e., Low-stable, High-decreasing, and High-stable) and female participants were divided into two trajectory groups (i.e., Low-stable and High-decreasing). The main finding of this study is that women who experienced non-physically forced sexual activity significantly decreases sports participation throughout the trajectory in 'High-decreasing group.' The effect of non-physically forced sexual activity on women's sports participation was considerably weakened and became insignificant after including psychological depression in the model as a potential mediator. Discussion: Special attention should be paid to sport participation among women victims of non-physically forced sexual activity. Further studies are needed to examine other potential mediators in addition to psychological depression when examining the effect of non-physically forced sexual activity on sport participation in women.

Keywords : adolescent, group-based trajectory modeling, sexual assault, young adult

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