

The perception of stress in athletes

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Abstract

Background During sport activities, physical stress on account of effort and emotional stress, related also to psycho-emotional factors can influence performance and the subjective state of health.

Aims. The aim of this study was to measure the perception of stress in young athletes, students from the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport and other faculties of the "Babes-Bolyai" University in Cluj-Napoca.

Methods. The subjects interviewed, 179 in number, were divided into 2 groups: group I - control, 100 students who do not practice any sports performance, with a mean age of 20.58 ± 1.34 years; group II - experimental, 79 students who practice sport performance, with a mean age of 19.87 ± 1.59 years. As research method, in order to determine perceptions of stress, PSS questionnaire was used.

Results. Total score values were similar in both groups. Group I presented scores of 19.51, lower than group II. Group II presented scores of 18.90. On items 3 and 10 athletes had significantly higher mean scores than the control group. In items 4, 7 and 8 the control group had significantly higher scores than the group of athletes. Female subjects in group I had PSS score significantly lower than male subjects. The female subjects in group II had PSS scores comparable to male subjects. The subjects in group I from the Department of Psychology had significantly lower PSS score than subjects from the group I from the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education. In group I the subject has significantly different PSS scores depending of the year of study.

Conclusions. Sport has in youngsters favourable effects on perceived physical stress. The practice of sports slightly decreases the PSS score, compared with those who do not practice sports. PSS total score in competitive athletes is considered easy, without differences in gender, year of study and sport practiced. PSS score differ between students performing competitive sport from FEFS (with higher values) and those in other faculties.

Keywords: stress, perceived stress, sports, PSS questionnaire