

Research on the Current Problems, Influencing Factors, and Coping Strategies of Psychological Health of College Athletes

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Abstract: This study systematically analyzes the psychological health problems of college athletes through literature research, questionnaire surveys, and interviews. Research has found that college athletes have psychological health problems such as anxiety, depression, inadequate stress management, and interpersonal relationship problems, which are influenced by individual traits, academic training conflicts, and lack of social support. Based on this, strategies such as building a collaborative management mechanism, optimizing the mental health service system, and strengthening the cultivation of psychological resilience are proposed to provide theoretical and practical references for improving the mental health status of college athletes.

Keywords: college athletes; Psychological health issues; Influencing factors; Response strategy

DOI:10.69979/3041-0843.25.02.023

1 Introduction

Against the backdrop of the booming development of university sports and the promotion of the "Healthy China" strategy, the size of the group of college athletes continues to expand. They play an important role in college sports events and national fitness activities, but they also need to cope with the dual challenges of academic and athletic performance, and their mental health issues are becoming increasingly prominent. Psychological health is an important foundation for athletes to maintain a good competitive state and achieve comprehensive development, which directly affects their training enthusiasm, competition performance, and long-term career development. At present, research on the mental health of college athletes is relatively insufficient, lacking systematic and in-depth analysis. Therefore, exploring the existing problems and influencing factors of their mental health and proposing coping strategies are of great practical significance for promoting the physical and mental health of college athletes and improving the quality of physical education in universities.

2 Existing mental health issues among college athletes

2.1 Emotional and psychological issues

College athletes have many problems in terms of emotions and psychological states. Anxiety and depression are more prominent, and due to multiple pressures such as academic exams and sports competitions, some athletes often experience symptoms such as excessive tension, worry, and negative depression. For example, on the eve of the National College Athletics Championships, athletes from a certain university's track and field team suffered from insomnia for several days due to concerns about poor competition results. They were unable to concentrate during training and ultimately performed poorly during the competition. In addition, long-term high-intensity training and competitive environments have led to some athletes developing a sense of coercion and hostility, such as excessive demands on their own movements and negative emotions such as jealousy within the team.

2.2 Stress Perception and Coping Issues

In terms of stress perception and coping, college athletes face complex and diverse sources of stress, covering multiple aspects such as academics, training competitions, and social expectations. In terms of academic performance, university courses are highly specialized and systematic, while athletes often miss classes due to training and competitions, making it difficult to keep up with the teaching progress and facing multiple pressures such as course exams and credit acquisition. According to a survey, about 62.5% of college athletes reported that insufficient study time due to training has affected their academic performance. In terms of training and competition, high-intensity daily training brings physical fatigue and pain risks, and the pursuit of excellent results in competitions puts athletes in a long-term state of psychological pressure. Most athletes lack effective stress coping strategies and often adopt negative methods such as avoidance and self denial, leading to the accumulation of negative emotions.

2.3 Interpersonal Relationships and Adaptation Issues

In terms of interpersonal relationships and adaptation, athletes have reduced communication with ordinary classmates due to busy training and competitions, resulting in significant differences in their life trajectories and difficulty integrating into campus life. Within a team, competitive relationships can easily lead to conflicts, for example, in a basketball team, there may be barriers between team members in order to compete for the main position. Meanwhile, poor communication between athletes and coaches or improper coach management can also affect their psychological state. In addition, college athletes need to adapt to new learning, training, and living environments after entering universities. Some athletes experience learning anxiety and psychological pressure due to difficulties in adapting to autonomous learning modes and new training methods in universities.

3 The influencing factors of psychological health of college athletes

3.1 Individual factors

Individual factors have a significant impact on the mental health of college athletes. There are significant differences in personality traits, and introverted and sensitive athletes are more susceptible to external evaluations. When faced with pressure and setbacks, they are more likely to develop negative emotions and are unwilling to seek help proactively. An introverted athlete from a gymnastics team at a certain university, after making a mistake during a competition, fell into self doubt for a long time and refused to communicate with others, leading to worsening psychological problems. Some athletes have insufficient psychological adjustment ability, lack emotional management and stress coping skills, have limited understanding of mental health knowledge, and have weak awareness of proactive maintenance.

3.2 Academic and Training Factors

Academic and training factors are important aspects that affect the mental health of college athletes. The conflict between academic and training time is severe, with tight schedules in university courses and athletes' training competitions taking up a lot of time, resulting in lagging learning progress. For example, during the preparation for the Provincial Games, a swimming team athlete from a certain university had to train for up to 6 hours a day and had no time to attend to course studies. As a result, multiple course grades were marked with red lights, leading to anxiety. High intensity training brings physical fatigue and the risk of injury, uncertainty in competition results, and the pursuit of honor, which puts athletes in a long-term state of psychological stress.

3.3 Social support factors

Social support factors have a significant impact on the mental health of college athletes. Insufficient family support, some parents overly focus on grades, neglect psychological needs, and lack communication. A survey shows that about 38.7% of parents' first reaction after their children lose a competition is to criticize and blame, rather than give comfort and encouragement. Schools and coaches do not attach enough importance to the mental health of athletes, lack a sound education system and service mechanism, and coaches pay more attention to training and competition performance. Peer support is limited, athletes have little communication with ordinary classmates, and due to competition within the team,

some people are unwilling to confide their psychological problems to their teammates.

4 Strategies for coping with mental health issues among college athletes

4.1 Building a collaborative management mechanism

Building a collaborative management mechanism is an important measure to improve the mental health of college athletes. Establish a three-level linkage management system of school, college, and team, clarify the responsibilities of each level in mental health management, coordinate planning by the school, integrate daily management by the college, and closely monitor and communicate with sports team coaches in a timely manner. Strengthen collaboration between departments such as the Student Affairs Office, Academic Affairs Office, and Sports College in universities to achieve comprehensive management of athletes' academic, training, and psychological aspects. For example, schools can regularly organize joint meetings of multiple departments to jointly discuss and solve the problems faced by athletes.

4.2 Optimizing the mental health service system

To optimize the mental health service system, it is necessary to improve the mental health education curriculum and activities, incorporate them into compulsory courses, develop targeted content, adopt diversified teaching methods, and regularly organize lectures, workshops, and other knowledge dissemination activities. Strengthen psychological counseling and intervention services, equip professional teams, establish appointment systems, carry out group counseling and crisis intervention, and provide convenient support through online platforms. A certain university has effectively improved the mental health knowledge and self adjustment ability of athletes by offering psychological health education courses, combining case analysis, role-playing and other teaching methods.

4.3 Strengthening the cultivation of psychological resilience

Strengthen the cultivation of psychological resilience, carry out psychological training courses, combine them with physical and technical training, cultivate athletes' self-awareness, emotional regulation and other abilities, and use simulation training and other methods to improve their psychological state. Establish positive role models and incentive mechanisms, commend athletes with good mental health performance, and create a positive atmosphere. If a certain university's track and field team sets up the "Star of Mental Health" award to commend athletes who have shown outstanding performance in psychological adjustment, it has stimulated the enthusiasm of team members to pay attention to mental health.

4.4 Improve the social support network

Improve the social support network, strengthen family support and guidance, and help parents establish correct concepts and master communication skills through forms such as parent schools. Create a good school and team atmosphere, promote communication between athletes and ordinary classmates, strengthen team culture construction, and improve the relationship between coaches and athletes. Integrate social resources, collaborate with professional institutions, utilize media promotion, and increase social attention. A certain university invited a professional psychological counseling agency to conduct specialized training for athletes and their parents, effectively improving parent-child communication and the psychological state of athletes.

5 Conclusion

The mental health problems of college athletes are influenced by multiple factors, and existing issues such as emotions, stress coping, and interpersonal relationships cannot be ignored. By establishing a collaborative management mechanism, optimizing the mental health service system, strengthening the cultivation of psychological resilience, and improving the social support network, strategies can effectively improve their mental health status. In the future, universities and all sectors of society should continue to pay attention and explore innovative intervention measures to provide guarantees for the physical and mental health and comprehensive development of college athletes, and promote the development of physical education in universities.

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