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ANALYSIS OF FEAR OF COVID-19 LEVELS OF INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED IN TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine Covid-19 fear levels of individuals engaged in team and individual sports in terms of some socio-demographic characteristics. Population of the study consists of individuals engaged in team and individual sports. Sample of the study consists of 218 athletes selected by random sampling method among the athletes engaged in individual and team sports. "Personal Information Form" developed by the researchers and Covid-19 Fear Scale adapted into Turkish by Haktanır et al. (2020) were used as data collection tools. All statistical calculations were made in SPSS 22.0 V statistical package program. A significant difference was found between the total score of Fear of Covid-19 Scale in terms of gender, alcohol use status, vaccination status and the sports discipline of the participants ($p < 0.05$). No significant relationship was found between the age and sports age of the participants and the total score of Fear of Covid-19 Scale ($p > 0.05$). As a conclusion, the results of the data analysis showed that the participants had moderate levels of fear of COVID-19 in terms of all variables in the study.

Keywords: COVID-19, Fear, Sports, Athlete

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 first came out in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei province of the People's Republic of China (Kiyat, 2020). After the outbreak of the epidemic, many countries took and implemented measures to protect their citizens. The main areas that come to the fore among these measures are health, economy, business and education (Sönmez, 2020). This uncertainty, along with the measures taken during the process and the resulting restrictions caused anxiety in individuals. COVID-19 has affected the whole society at the same time in education, sports, art and many other fields.

This process, which was called a pandemic, spread rapidly and affected many people (Morens, Folkers, & Fauci, 2009). In addition to causing uncertainty, the damage it caused on individuals, especially in terms of health and even the negative consequences such as death caused an increase in fear and anxiety in the society.

Anxiety causes unrest, fear and tension in individuals (Karageorghis & Terry, 2015). It is defined as a situation that is perceived as a threat (or is a threat), negative emotional states experienced due to internal or external reasons, and a situation that affects the life and future of individuals (Günay et al., 2017: 176). Especially the fear that occurs during periods such as the pandemic process triggers anxiety in individuals who are not very healthy in the psychological sense, and also causes an increase in stress levels of healthy individuals (Shigemura et al., 2020). It was observed that due to this process, amateur and professional athletes were affected by the postponement of competitions in the field of sports, athletes were not able to train at desired levels, and restrictions and a negative process were experienced. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the fear levels of amateur and professional athletes about Covid-19.

METHOD

Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Ondokuz Mayıs University approved the implementation of the study with 24.09.2021 dated and 2021/748 numbered decision. Descriptive survey model was used in the study since the study aimed to determine a current situation. Survey models are research approaches that aim to describe past or present situations as they are (Karasar, 2014).

Population and Sample

Individuals engaged in team and individual sports constitute the population of the study, while the sample consists of 218 individuals selected by random sampling method among individuals engaged in team and individual sports.

Data Collection Instruments

Fear of Covid-19 Scale developed by Ahorsu et al. (2020) and adapted into Turkish by Haktanır et al (2020) was used to examine the Fear of Covid-19 levels of the participants in the study. The scale consists of 7 items, with a 5-point Likert scale of "strongly disagree" 1, "disagree" 2, "neither agree nor disagree" 3, "agree" 4, and "strongly

agree” 5. Possible scores range from 7 to 35, with higher scores indicative of greater fear of coronavirus. Cronbach alpha value was found as .82 in the original study.

Statistical Analysis

Reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) were calculated in the study in order to analyse internal consistency of the answers given by the participants to the Fear of Covid-19 Scale items (Table 1).

Table 1. Internal Consistency Coefficients of Participants’ Answers to Scale Items

Scale	Internal Consistency	
	Coefficient	Evaluation
<i>Fear of Covid-19 Scale</i>	0.927	Highly reliable

In the statistical evaluation of the data, the assumption of normality was first examined with Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test ($p>0.05$).

In the study, whether the total scores of the scale differed in terms of the variables of gender (female-male), level of interest in sports (amateur-professional), type of sports discipline (amateur-professional), smoking and alcohol use and vaccination status was found by using Independent t-test, while whether the scores differed according to the variable of income level was found by using One-way ANOVA and Tukey multiple comparison test. In addition, the relationship between the age and sports age of the participants and the total scores of the scale was found with Pearson correlation coefficient. The data found were expressed in mean and standard deviation, and the results were considered significant at $p<0.05$ significance level. SPSS 22.0 V software was used in statistical procedures.

FINDINGS

This part of the study includes information about the results of the analysis of data.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distributions of Demographic Characteristics

Gender	n	%	Status of smoking	n	%
Female	81	37.2	Yes	73	33.5
Male	137	62.8	No	145	66.5
Total	218	100.0	Total	218	100.0
Status of consuming alcohol	n	%	Status of being vaccinated	n	%
Yes	49	22.5	Yes	206	94.5
No	169	77.5	No	12	5.5
Total	218	100.0	Total	218	100.0
Type of sports discipline	n	%	Level of interest in sports	n	%
Team	106	48.6	Amateur	150	68.8
Individual	112	51.4	Professional	68	31.2
Total	218	100.0	Total	218	100.0
Level of income	n	%			
Low (Income<Expense)	64	29.4			
Moderate (Income=Expense)	146	67.0			
High (Income>Expense)	8	3.7			
Total	218	100.0			

37.2% of the athletes in the study were female and 62.8% were male athletes. 68.8% of the participants were amateur, 51.4% were engaged in individual sports, 67.0% had moderate level of income. In addition, it was found that the majority of the participants did not consume alcohol with a rate of 77.5% and were vaccinated with a rate of 94.5% (Table 2).

Table 3. Correlations Between Age, Sports Age, and Fear of Covid-19 Levels

Scale		Age	Sports Age
Fear of Covid-19 Scale	r-value	0.065	-0.010
	p-value	0.339	0.887

Age and sports age of the participants were not significantly correlated with the total score of Fear of Covid-19 Scale ($p > 0.05$).

Table 4. Fear of Covid-19 Levels of the Participants in Terms of Some Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics	n	Mean	SD	P-value
Gender				
Female	81	15.63	5.84	0.009
Male	137	13.36	6.26	
Status of smoking				
Yes	73	13.55	6.29	0.270
No	145	14.53	6.14	
Status of consuming alcohol				
Yes	49	12.27	5.30	0.013
No	169	14.76	6.33	
Status of being vaccinated				
Yes	206	14.42	6.22	0.029
No	12	10.42	4.38	
Type of sports discipline				
Team	106	13.32	5.88	0.041
Individual	112	15.04	6.39	
Level of interest in sports				
Amateur	150	14.09	5.77	0.702
Professional	68	14.44	7.09	
Level of income				
Low (Income<Expense)	64	13.70	6.35	0.262
Moderate (Income=Expense)	146	14.24	5.93	
High (Income>Expense)	8	17.50	9.10	

SD=Standard deviation

Significant difference was found between the total Fear of Covid-19 scale scores in terms of gender ($p=0.009$), status of consuming alcohol ($p=0.013$), vaccination status ($p=0.029$) and the type of sports discipline ($p=0.041$). Smoking status, level of interest in sports and income level were not found to be significantly different ($p>0.05$; Table 4).

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

Covid-19 pandemic has affected the society in almost every field. As in the whole world, this epidemic has caused a destruction in the society and in our country as well. This process has also affected individuals' psychology negatively. Today, the Covid-19 epidemic still makes its impact felt. With this epidemic, which has no definite cure, measures have been tried to be taken by means of various precautions and vaccines. In this process, a part of the society welcomed the vaccine, while a part of it opposed. A series of measures such as mask, distance, not being in crowded environments, etc. were taken. This situation caused a great fear not only in our country but also in the world.

The results of the study which analysed the Fear of Covid-19 levels in individual and team sports athletes did not reveal a significant relationship between the age and sports age of the participants and the total score of Fear of Covid-19 Scale. In addition, smoking status, level of interest in sports and income variables were not found to be significantly different. However, a significant difference was found between Fear of Covid-19 scale total score in terms of gender, status of consuming alcohol, vaccination status and type of sports discipline. Therefore, in the study, total score of Fear of Covid-19 scale was higher in women when compared with men, in participants who did not consume alcohol when compared with those who did, in participants who had been vaccinated for Covid-19 when compared with those who had not, and in participants who were engaged in individual sports when compared with those who were engaged in team sports.

When studies conducted in literature were reviewed, the following conclusions were reached; it was found in studies conducted that total anxiety levels of athletes engaged in team sports were higher than the total anxiety levels of athletes engaged in individual sports (Ağduman, 2021), Covid-19 triggered fear and anxiety in individuals (Ahorsu et al., 2020), fear of Covid-19 levels of athletes were moderate (Batu and Aydın, 2020), participants had moderate levels of stress and were not overly affected by the process (Çiftçi and Demir, 2020), Covid-19 among the family members was a factor that triggered anxiety (Duan et al., 2020), Covid-19 affected individuals negatively and caused anxiety (Lei et al., 2020), female athletes had higher anxiety levels than male athletes (Öktem, 2020), and participants had higher levels of fear of Covid-19 (Günlü et al., 2021).

When the results of the study were compared with studies conducted in the literature, similar to the results of the present study, significant difference was found in terms of gender in Covid-19 fear levels of the participants in Karakuş et al. (2022)'s study. Female participants were found to have higher Covid-19 fear levels, as in the present study. Similar results were found in other studies (Bakioğlu et al., 2020; Gencer, 2020; Çay, 2021). Unlike the results of the present study, Yıldız et al. (2021) found that athletes engaged in individual sports had higher Covid-19 fear levels. In the present study, statistically significant difference was not found in the Covid-19 fear

levels of the participants in terms of the variable of income level. However, Yıldız et al. (2021) found statistically significant difference in the Covid-19 fear levels of their participants in terms of the variable of income level.

As a conclusion, the results of the present study showed significant difference in the Fear of Covid-19 scale scores in terms of gender, status of consuming alcohol, vaccination status and the type of sports discipline. It was also concluded that the participants had moderate levels of fear of COVID-19 in terms of all variables in the study.

SUGGESTIONS

In terms of sports, COVID-19 has negatively affected both amateur and professional athletes. Various restrictions were imposed in the field of sports and competitions were temporarily suspended. The pandemic also resulted in the fact that especially applied courses could not be processed in a healthy way in the Faculties of Sport Sciences. Therefore, this process has caused both psychological and physical damage to individuals, and also negatively affected them in terms of education. Especially professional athletes both stayed away from the field and experienced financial problems. In the light of all this information, in order to prevent the ongoing epidemic, mask, distance and hygiene rule should be followed in the society and it is recommended that individuals who do not welcome the vaccine should be vaccinated. At the same time, it is recommended that people who are adversely affected by this process should get support from experts.

ETHICAL TEXT

In this article, the journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics, and journal ethical rules were followed. The responsibility belongs to the author (s) for any violations that may arise regarding the article. Ethics committee permission was taken from Social Sciences and Ethics Committee with a date of 24.09.2021 and number of 2021/748.

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