

FACTORS OF DECREASING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE COMPETITIVE ACTIVITY OF ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the issues of mental burnout in sports activities. The relationship between perceived stress and mental burnout among athletes involved in individual and team sports was studied. The study made it possible to establish mental burnout as a consequence of the process of chronic stress. Empirically, it has also been possible to establish a positive relationship between stress and burnout. The study showed a significant expression of perceived stress among athletes involved in individual sports, as opposed to team sports, which is associated with the presence of a social factor in team sports. Likewise, mental burnout, according to its indicators, has received wider development among athletes in individual sports, as opposed to team sports. It has been empirically proven that mental burnout is expressed in a feeling of physical tiredness, a decrease in the level of claims, followed in the future by deep disappointment, a drop in interest in sports activities and the termination of a sports career. The work provides some recommendations that could allow an athlete to maintain an interest in training and competitive activities, improve himself and strive to maintain his sports career.

Key words: mental burnout, emotional burnout, stress, athletes, sports activity, devaluation of achievements, level of aspirations, descriptive research.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются вопросы психического выгорания в спортивной деятельности. Изучена взаимосвязь между воспринимаемым стрессом и психическим выгоранием у спортсменов, занимающихся индивидуальными и командными видами спорта. Проведенное исследование позволило установить психическое выгорание как следствие процесса хронического стресса. Эмпирическим путем также удалось установить положительную связь между стрессом и выгоранием. Исследование показало значительное выражение воспринимаемого стресса у спортсменов, занимающихся индивидуальными видами спорта, в отличие от командных, что связано с присутствием социального фактора в командных видах спорта. Так же и психические

выгорание, соответственно своим показателям, получило более широкое развитие у спортсменов индивидуальных видов спорта, в отличие от командных. Эмпирически было доказано, что психическое выгорание выражается в чувстве физической усталости, снижении уровня притязаний, сменяющейся в перспективе глубоким разочарованием, падением интереса к спортивной деятельности и прекращением спортивной карьеры. В работе даны некоторые рекомендации, которые могли бы позволить спортсмену поддерживать интерес к тренировочной и соревновательной деятельности, самосовершенствоваться и стремиться к сохранению своей спортивной карьеры.

Ключевые слова: психическое выгорание, эмоциональное выгорание, стресс, спортсмены, спортивная деятельность, обесценивание достижений, уровень притязаний.

INTRODUCTION

High physical and mental stress, focus on achieving the highest possible results, fierce competition of rivals characterize modern sports of the highest achievements. Therefore, it is extremely important to pay attention to the influence of psychological factors on the achievements of athletes [1; 3; 6].

Burnout in athletic performance is a response to chronic stress. It contains physical, behavioral and cognitive components. Mental burnout is revealed in psychological, emotional, and sometimes physical withdrawal from activity that previously served as a source of pleasure for an athlete [1; 4; 6]. External reasons for the development of mental burnout in sports activity are: intense physical activity, unfavorable conditions of the training process, difficulties in relationships with a coach, lack of social support from the family. The main internal causes leading to the appearance of mental burnout in sports are revealed in the personal characteristics of athletes, such as anxiety, self-esteem, level of aspirations, locus of control, motivation [2; 4; 5; 9].

The relevance of research. Despite the long history of research on mental burnout in sports, much has yet to be revealed. In particular, why mental burnout is triggered by stress. These problematic aspects formed the basis of our empirical research. Thus, literary sources show that mental burnout and stress affect performance in sports activity and lead to withdrawal from it. However, there is no literature on how stress causes burnout. Moreover, there is no evidence of the form and degree of relationship between these variables. Mental burnout in sports activity has negative consequences: a decrease in the effectiveness of training and competitive activity, susceptibility to diseases, the appearance of injuries, and further retirement from sports. The lack of

reliable data on the characteristics of the manifestations of mental burnout and its relationship with stress in athletes of different sexes and qualifications, representatives of team and individual sports prompted this study.

The aim of this study was to study the relationship between perceived stress and mental burnout in individual and team athletes.

Research tasks:

1. To study the level of perceived stress and mental burnout in athletes involved in individual and team sports.
2. To identify the differences in the level of stress and mental burnout in athletes involved in individual and team sports.
3. Check for links between perceived stress and burnout.

Object of the research: 100 athletes took part in the research. In accordance with the tasks set in the study, the sample included athletes of both sexes, among whom were representatives of team (volleyball, basketball) and individual (rhythmic gymnastics, boxing) sports, highly qualified athletes (CMS, MS).

LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

Considerable efforts in sports psychology have been aimed at identifying personal and situational factors that contribute to the burnout of athletes [1; 5; 6; 7]. Burnout was first identified in the early 1970s by Freudenberger (1974) as a behavioral pattern [4; 8; 9]. This is related to the relevance of studies of competitive stress and the means of overcoming it, to the problem of athletes' resistance to various sources of stress arising during competition. Regarding the relationship between stress and burnout, all studies show that stress is a predictor of burnout [1; 2; 6; 8; 9; 10], being a stressful experience of organizing competitive athletes - a popular area of research of sports psychologists over the past decade [1; 6; 9]. Of particular importance in the modern world of research is chronic stress and its consequence - depression. The consequence of chronic stress is mental burnout, which affects the effectiveness of training and the success of competitive activity and reduces their productivity [7; 9].

As a methodological basis for the study, we used:

- ✓ The concept of mental burnout in sports: theoretical models and causes of the phenomenon (Grin E.I.) [2]
- ✓ Concepts explaining the nature of the development of mental burnout. These include: the cognitive-affective model of R. Smith (1986), the model of involvement in sports by G. Schmidt, G. Stein (1991), the model of the fixed negative response to stress by J. Silva (1990), the model of one-dimensional development of identity and external control J. Coakley (1992) [7; 8; 9].

Research methods: 1) Mental burnout questionnaire among athletes T. Riedek and A. Smith, which contains 3 subscales and a total of 15 items, 5 of which are designed to measure emotional and physical exhaustion, 5 - for the depreciation of achievements and 5 to reduce feelings fulfilled duty [9].

2) Scale of psychological stress PSM-25, aimed at measuring the level of stress in athletes (high, medium, low) [1].

DISCUSSION

Data was collected at sports facilities before training. Other issues related to the age of the participants, gender, type of sport were also taken into account. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) according to the PSM-25 Psychological Stress Scale.

Table 1.

Stress indicators in athletes engaged in individual and team sports (n = 100)

Stress level	Frequency of incidents,%		Frequency of incidents,%
	Athletes in team sports (n = 50)	Athletes in individual sports (n = 50)	
High	23,4	76,6	p <0,05
Average	31,7	68,3	p <0,05
Low	69,5	30,5	p <0,01

In the group of athletes involved in team sports, there are significantly more athletes with a low level of stress (69.5%). Athletes in team sports receive more social support in the team from their teammates, so they can share responsibility for the results during training and competitive activities. As a result, in their group there is significantly less number of athletes who have high and medium stress levels.

Athletes who go in for individual sports rely only on their own strengths and capabilities, that is, there is no social support in the team. Failures arising in the process of competitive activity, for which they are responsible, can be a source of increased stress levels (76.6).

Next, we consider the results of the manifestations of mental burnout. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) for each of the items on the subscales of the mental burnout questionnaire in athletes T. Riedek and A. Smith.

Table 2.

Manifestation of mental burnout of varying degrees in athletes (n = 100)

Mental burnout indicators	Incidence rate,%	
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	High	Medium	Low	Standard deviation
Decreased sense of accomplishment	10,5	59,4	30,1	1,03
Emotional and physical exhaustion	13,2	75,8	11	1,04
Devaluation of achievements	12,2	60,9	26,9	1,19
Integral index of mental burnout	14	68	18	1,00

Evidence suggests that burnout is moderate to high in a large number of athletes. Interpretation of the severity of individual factors of mental burnout as a whole for the sample, presented in table 1, led to the following conclusions. Athletes who have a low level of mental burnout make up from 15 to 30.1% for the individual components of burnout and 18% for the integral component of mental burnout. The athletes who showed a high level of severity of individual components of mental burnout range from 10.5 to 13.2%. This allows us to conclude that mental burnout is an essential regulator of athletes' activity.

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of mental burnout indicators among athletes involved in individual and team sports.

Table 3.

**Indicators of mental burnout in athletes involved in individual and team sports
(n = 100)**

Mental burnout indicators	Level	Athletes engaged in team sports (n = 50)	Athletes in individual sports (n = 50)
Decreased sense of accomplishment	High	15,3	11,1
	Average	21,5	68,5
	Low	63,2	20,4
Emotional and physical exhaustion	High	10,5	17,3
	Average	71,1	69,4
	Low	18,4	13,3
Devaluation of achievements	High	12,7	15,4
	Average	69,9	66,8
	Low	17,4	17,8

Integral index of mental burnout	High	11,4	18,2
	Average	72	66,2
	Low	16,6	15,6

The data of the conducted research show that athletes, who go in for individual sports, are more inclined to “decrease the sense of achievement” and have a high level of severity of the indicator “emotional / physical exhaustion”. The research data showed that athletes involved in team sports have a low level of the indicator “decrease in the sense of achievement”. Here you can also talk about social support from the team. The following table 4 presents the results of the correlation analysis of mental burnout and stress levels.

Table 4.

The relationship between burnout and stress levels in athletes

Burnout rates and stress levels	Decreased sense of accomplishment	Emotional and physical exhaustion	Devaluation of achievements	Low stress	Average stress level	High stress
Reduced sense of accomplishment	1					
Emotional and physical exhaustion	0,40	1				
Devaluation of achievements	0,36	0,48	1			
Low stress	0,15	0,14	0,06	1		
Average stress level	0,38	0,46	0,27	0,26	1	
High stress	0,62**	0,50*	0,64* *	-	-	1

The data of the correlation analysis of the conducted study between the indicators of stress and mental burnout indicate the influence of the emerging stress state on the development of mental burnout in athletes. In particular, we see that high and medium

stress levels were closely correlated with the indicators "Decreased sense of accomplishment", as well as the relationship was revealed with the indicator "Devaluation of achievements". This study is also another piece of evidence that high levels of stress lead to emotional and physical exhaustion. In addition, we see positive correlations between the indicator "Devaluation of achievements" and indicators "Decreased sense of accomplishment" and "Emotional physical exhaustion". The results of the correlation analysis confirm that the occurrence of stressful situations in sports activity leads to mental burnout of athletes, which subsequently manifests itself in the athlete's withdrawal from sports.

RESULTS

The present study was designed to determine how stress affects burnout. Empirical research has shown a relationship between perceived stress and mental burnout.

The first finding confirms the results of many studies: stress is a reliable predictor of burnout. The higher the perceived stress level, the higher the likelihood of burnout.

The second conclusion reveals in detail what features of an athlete's personality react to a stressful state. Most of all, this is due to the motivational and emotional sphere of the athlete.

The study also shows that individual athletes are more likely to experience stress than athletes who practice team sports. This is due to the social factor, when in team sports the responsibility and the results of the competition are shared by all teammates, accordingly the perception of stress will be much less. The same division is observed in terms of mental burnout. In the presence of a social factor in team sports, the indicators "Decreased sense of accomplishment", "Devaluation of achievements" and "Emotional physical exhaustion" are poorly expressed.

CONCLUSION

Modern sports of the highest achievements is characterized by high physical and mental stress, an orientation towards achieving the highest possible results, and fierce competition between rivals. The conducted research showed how strongly perceived stress is reflected on the personality of athletes involved in individual sports. These two constructs are of great interest in the context of sports, and their relationship has been studied and tested empirically as much as possible. In particular, the lack of social support places all responsibility on the athlete himself, the hope is placed only on his own strengths and capabilities, that is, there is no social support for the team. Failures arising in the process of competitive activity, for which he is responsible, can be a source of increased stress levels. What cannot be said about team sports, in which there

is a spirit of sociality, when the result of the competition depends on all team members and, accordingly, responsibility is assigned to all athletes of this team.

Research into the relationship between perceived stress and mental burnout has shown a direct link. High stress levels lead to mental burnout. It is associated with the appearance of both physical, tic and emotional exhaustion. Mental burnout is also expressed in the devaluation of achievements, when the effectiveness of competitive activity does not cause positive emotions and does not stimulate further self-improvement in a sports career. The same is expressed in a decrease in the level of claims or a decrease in a sense of accomplishment.

Thus, burnout in athletes is direct evidence of perceived stress. As the study has shown, the development of mental burnout is of a staged nature. At first, significant energy costs are observed - a consequence of an extremely high positive attitude to the performance of competitive activity. Gradually, with the further development of mental stress, a feeling of fatigue begins to manifest itself, which is replaced in the future by deep disappointment, a drop in interest in sports activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The empirical data obtained require special work to train athletes in techniques and methods that reduce the manifestation of symptoms of "mental burnout". To maintain an athlete's interest in training and competitive activities and to increase his sports career, this article provides some recommendations.

Methods for maintaining interest in sports and minimizing the occurrence of physical fatigue include self-regulation methods, i.e. increasing the effectiveness of a person's functional capabilities through the formation of a special mental state to achieve the intended result. Some self-regulation methods are relaxation training, autogenous training, desensitization, reactive relaxation, meditation, etc.

It is also not unimportant to maintain motivation for going in for sports, it is necessary to correctly define short-term goals and objectives, expand the circle of contacts, form a positive outlook, and maintain a positive point of view.

Control after competitive emotions, both positive and negative (frustration or aggression, sports excitement) is a system-forming factor in monitoring the degree of mental stress, which can lead to mental burnout. In some cases, even a splash of negative emotions after the competition period is necessary, the manifestation of shouting, the use of anti-stress items, relaxation sand, switching to outdoor games, cycling is allowed. As Albert Einstein said: "Life is like riding a bicycle. You need to move to keep your balance. "

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