

Analysis of Pre-Competition Anxiety in Female Athletes in A Number of Women's Sports

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Abstract

The article presents the materials of the study devoted to the study of personal and situational anxiety in female athletes of adolescent age, in the period before competitions. The definition of personal and situational anxiety was applied using the method of C.D. Spielberger, as adapted by Yu.L. Khanin. It was established that the level of personal and situational anxiety in most athletes performing in individual sports is much higher and more pronounced than in athletes performing in team sports.

Key Words: sportswomen; personal anxiety; situational anxiety; individual sports; team sports

Introduction

Numerous domestic and foreign studies have shown that the psychological state of an athlete is an important component of his competitive and training activities, so the problem of studying the influence of the level of personal and situational anxiety of athletes is very relevant. Changes in the psychological mood of an athlete in the pre-competition and competitive periods are significant components of personal or team success in all sports [1-6, 8, 9, 11, 12]. Before moving on to the psychological characteristics of the phenomenon of anxiety in sports, it will be necessary, in our opinion, to consider this issue from a general psychological standpoint. According to published official data from studies conducted in recent years, anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health disorders in the modern world, as evidenced by the results of studies by the World Health Organization (WHO) [7]. In modern psychology, it is customary to distinguish between the concepts of "anxiety" and "anxiety" [7, 10]. According to the theory of C.D. Spielberger, a distinction is made between anxiety as a state (temporary experience) and anxiety as a personality trait (stable character trait) [10]. Anxiety, according to C.D. Spielberger, is "a reaction to impending danger, real or imaginary, and anxiety is an individual psychological feature consisting in an increased tendency to experience anxiety in various life situations, including those whose objective characteristics do not predispose to this [10]. According to a number of authors, anxiety is the result of a complex process that includes cognitive, affective and behavioral reactions of the individual, aimed at finding the source of danger and assessing the means to overcome it. Personal and situational anxiety, demonstrated by a person in difficult life situations in moderation, helps him to overcome himself and difficulties, develop resilience in himself, and strengthen the volitional qualities of the individual [7, 10, 11].

As for the second term, there are different interpretations of the concept of "anxiety" in the psychological literature, although most researchers agree to

consider this concept differentially as a situational phenomenon and as a personality trait [7, 10, 11]. It is believed that anxiety is an individual psychological trait that manifests itself in a person's tendency to frequent and intense experiences of anxiety, as well as in a low threshold for its occurrence" [7, 10, 11]. The term "anxiety" is used to denote relatively stable individual differences in an individual's tendency to experience this state. In this case, anxiety means a personality trait [7, 10, 11]. Anxiety, as a trait, or personal anxiety, is not directly manifested in behavior. But its level can be determined based on how often and how intensely an individual experiences anxiety states [7, 10, 11]. Anxiety itself is a normative and necessary condition for personality development. On the other hand, anxiety is considered as a state of emotional discomfort and is characterized by the experienced emotions of tension, fear and nervousness, which is accompanied by various vegetative reactions and occurs in difficult, stressful situations [7, 10, 11]. Thus, by anxiety we mean "an individual psychological feature manifested in a person's tendency to frequent and intense experiences of a state of anxiety, as well as in a low threshold for its occurrence" [7, 10, 11]. Reactive (situational) anxiety characterizes a person's state at a given moment in time, which is characterized by subjectively experienced emotions: tension, anxiety, concern, nervousness in a given specific situation. This state occurs as an emotional reaction to an extreme or stressful situation, can vary in intensity and be dynamic over time [7, 10, 11]. According to T.A. Polshkova (2013), "situational anxiety as a condition is characterized by subjectively experienced emotions: tension, anxiety, nervousness. This condition arises as an emotional reaction to a stressful situation and can vary in intensity and dynamism over time. Increased anxiety caused by the fear of possible failure, assessment by adults or peers, is an adaptive mechanism that increases the responsibility of the individual in the face of social demands and attitudes" [7]. A certain level of anxiety is a natural and obligatory feature of an active, productive personality. Each

person has their own optimal, or desirable, level of anxiety - this is the so-called useful anxiety. A person's assessment of their condition in this regard is an essential component of self-control and self-education for them [7]. The issues related to psychological characteristics of training and competitive activities of athletes in different sports and their gender-age changes have always been relevant for sports psychology [1-6, 8, 9, 11, 12]. The sports career and achievements of any athlete largely depend on knowledge of these characteristics and the ability to manage them [1-6, 8, 9, 11, 12]. In particular, in our opinion, the characteristics of personal and situational anxiety in female athletes, both in individual and team sports, have not been fully studied [1-6, 8, 9, 11, 12]. Among domestic authors, the issues of anxiety in the pre-competition, competitive and post-competition periods were studied by such researchers as Yu. Khanin, 2003; A.I. Chikurov, A.P. Shumilin, 2006; E.P. Ilyin, 2008; V.V. Egorov, 2019; N.A. Varenikov, 2012; A.Kh. Deineko, N.L. Bolyak, 2012; L.N. Akimova, 2014; E.M. Gilyazetdinova, 2015; A.I. Rogachev, L.G. Maidokina, 2015. These authors drew attention to changes in sports results in the training and competition cycles in their direct dependence on both personal and situational anxiety. Therefore, our study is an attempt to consider aspects of anxiety in adolescent female athletes in a number of women's individual and team sports that are popular today.

Aim

The aim of the study is to examine the dynamics of both personal and situational anxiety in the pre-competition period in female athletes competing in individual and team sports.

Hypothesis of the article

During the preparation for this study, its author put forward a working hypothesis, the essence of which was as follows: in athletes of different age groups and in different sports, under the influence of intense physical and

psycho-emotional stress, during the training and competitive processes, manifestations of individual, personal and situational anxiety of varying degrees arise.

Methods and means of research

This study was conducted with the voluntary involvement of female athletes of teenage age, involved in a number of individual (table tennis and freestyle wrestling) and team (volleyball, beach volleyball, basketball, handball) sports. A total of 78 athletes took part in the study, their average age was 20.04 ± 0.25 years. The total experience of practicing these sports ranged from 3 to 10 years. We used such research methods as literary analysis of available sources of information on the issue under study, the technique of C.D. Spielberger, as adapted by Yu.L. Khanin [10, 11] and interviewing, to identify and clarify the existing causes of anxiety in athletes during competitions. This test is presented in the form of a questionnaire of 40 questions. The test is a reliable source of information on a person's self-assessment of their anxiety level at the moment (reactive (situational) anxiety) and personal anxiety (as a stable characteristic of a person). We conducted testing using two forms with questions: one form is designed to measure the indicators of situational anxiety, and the second is to record and measure the level of personal anxiety [10, 11]. In this case, a low level of situational and personal anxiety corresponds to a sum of points ≤ 30 points, for an average level - from 31 to 44 points, for a high level of anxiety - 45 and $>$ points [10, 11]. All athletes who took part in the study conducted by the author gave their voluntary, both oral and written consent for it to be conducted.

Results of the study and discussion

As a result of the study, we established the following manifestations of individual anxiety, presented in Table 1:

№	Name of the indicator	Individual anxiety level		
		Low level	Intermediate level	High level
1.	Freestyle wrestling (n=16)	3 (18,75%)	7 (43,75%)	6 (37,50%)
2.	Table tennis (n=14)	4 (28,57%)	5 (35,71%)	5 (35,71%)
4.	Triathlon (n=11)	3 (27,27%)	4 (36,36%)	4 (36,36%)
4.	Weightlifting (n=11)	4 (36,36%)	2 (18,18%)	5 (45,46%)
5.	Powerlifting (n=12)	3 (25,00%)	3 (25,00%)	6 (50,00%)

Table 1: Indicators of personal anxiety in female athletes in individual sports, %

The data of the conducted study show that in individual sports, of all female athletes (n=64), a low level of personal anxiety before competitions was determined in 17 (26.56%) athletes, an average level - in 21 (32.81%) and a high level of personal anxiety - in 26 (40.63%) athletes. It is noteworthy that there is a fairly high number of athletes with a high pre-competition level of

personal anxiety. The highest level of personal anxiety was found in athletes involved in strength sports. Most of these athletes have sports and competition experience from 3 to 4 years. The data of the study on situational anxiety of female athletes in individual sports are presented in Table 2:

№	Name of the indicator	Situational Anxiety Level		
		Low level	Intermediate level	High level
1.	Freestyle wrestling (n=16)	1 (6,55%)	5 (31,25%)	10 (62,5%)
2.	Table tennis (n=14)	2 (14,29%)	4 (28,57%)	8 (57,14%)
4.	Triathlon (n=11)	1 (9,09%)	3 (27,27%)	7 (63,64%)
4.	Weightlifting (n=11)	2 (18,18%)	1 (9,09%)	8 (72,73%)
5.	Powerlifting (n=12)	2 (16,67%)	4 (33,33%)	6 (50,00%)

Table 2: Indicators of situational anxiety in female athletes in individual sports, %

The indicators of situational anxiety in the group of female athletes with individual sports are somewhat different - a low level of situational anxiety was determined in 24 (37.50%) athletes, an average level - in 20 (31.25%) and a high level of situational anxiety was determined in the largest number of athletes - 39 (60.94%). With additional interviews it turned out that these

are athletes with insufficient sports and training-competition experience, who still have insufficient experience and psychological readiness to participate in competitions and insufficiently high sports results. The research data on personal anxiety of female athletes in team sports are presented in Table 3:

№	Name of the indicator	Level of personal anxiety		
		Low level	Intermediate level	High level
1.	Volleyball players (n=11)	5 (45,46%)	5 (45,46%)	1 (9,09%)
2.	Beach volleyball (n=10)	6 (60,00%)	4 (40,00%)	–
3.	Basketball (n=12)	5 (41,67%)	5 (41,67%)	2 (16,66%)
4.	Handball (n=15)	8 (53,33%)	6 (40,00%)	1 (6,67%)

Table 3: Indicators of personal anxiety in female athletes in team sports, %

Determining the level of situational anxiety in the same group of sportswomen (n=48) yielded the following result: a low level of situational anxiety was determined in 19 (39.58%) sportswomen, an average level – in 25 (52.08%) and, finally, a high level of situational anxiety – only in 4 (8.33%). The interview data showed that the number of sportswomen with a high level of situational anxiety includes young sportswomen with insufficient competitive experience.

Conclusions

1. According to the conducted research, it was established that low and medium levels of personal and situational anxiety prevail among female athletes in team sports, and high levels of anxiety prevail among representatives of individual sports.

2. High levels of personal and situational anxiety are typical of young female athletes with insufficient experience of competitive activities and low levels of sports qualification.

3. Research and observations concerning the psychological aspects of training and competitive activities in any sport, and especially in women's individual and team sports, require constant, targeted close attention and joint efforts of the coach, sports doctor and sports psychologist.

4. The hypothesis of the study, put forward by the author, was confirmed in full.

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