



The Impact of Physical Activity and Healthy Lifestyle Patterns on Athletes' Mental Health

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ABSTRACT This study aims to explore the impact of physical activity and healthy lifestyle on athletes' mental health. The literature review method was employed to collect, analyze, and synthesize related research findings. The results indicate that regular physical activity and a healthy lifestyle have significant positive effects on athletes' mental health. Physical activity helps reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, improves mood, and enhances sleep quality. Healthy lifestyle practices, including good nutrition and stress management, also contribute to athletes' mental well-being. Psychosocial factors such as social support and positive training environments also play a crucial role in maintaining athletes' mental health. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the development of training programs and interventions in sports pay more attention to athletes' mental health aspects. These programs should be tailored to individual needs and encompass aspects of physical activity, healthy lifestyle, and adequate psychosocial support. Keywords: <i>Healthy Lifestyle, Mental Health, Physical Activity</i>			

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health has become a primary focus in the world of sports, especially considering the physical and mental pressures faced by athletes (Zhang et al., 2022). Physical activity, which is an integral element of athletes' lives, has a complex relationship with mental health. Research indicates that physical activity can provide significant benefits for mental health, such as reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety, enhancing mood, and improving sleep quality and cognition (Mannino et al., 2019). Additionally, physical activity can trigger the release of endorphins, hormones that play a role in generating feelings of happiness and reducing pain perception (Gröpel & Mesagno, 2019).

However, the benefits of physical activity cannot be separated from overall healthy lifestyle patterns (Egan, 2019). Healthy living encompasses aspects such as good nutrition, effective stress management, adequate sleep, and avoiding bad habits like smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. For athletes, optimal nutrition is crucial to support performance and physical recovery (Ströhle, 2019). A balanced diet can help maintain energy, repair muscle damage, and influence hormone balance related to mood and stress.

Athletes' mental health is also influenced by psychosocial factors related to the world of sports itself (Küttel & Larsen, 2020). Pressure to achieve optimal performance, intense competition, and expectations from coaches, family, and fans can be significant sources of stress. This is where a healthy lifestyle plays a key role (León-Zarceño, Moreno-Tenas, Boix Vilella, García-Naveira, & Serrano-Rosa, 2021). By maintaining a balance between physical training, rest, and recreational activities, athletes can manage stress more effectively, which in turn can enhance their mental well-being.

Moreover, it is important to consider that each individual responds differently to stress and physical activity (Rollo et al., 2021). A personalized approach to managing mental and physical health is crucial. Training programs and healthy lifestyle patterns tailored to individual needs can help athletes not only achieve peak performance but also maintain long-term mental well-being (Melekoğlu, Sezgin, Işın, & Türk, 2019).

The importance of mental health in athletic performance is increasingly recognized at various levels of competition (Küttel & Larsen, 2020). Sports organizations and professional teams now pay more attention to psychological support for athletes. Interventions such as psychological counseling, mental health programs, and stress management training are integral parts of athlete development (Mehrsafar et al., 2021). In this context, research that delves into the relationship between physical activity, healthy lifestyles, and mental health is highly relevant and necessary.

In this study, we will delve deeper into the positive impact of physical activity and healthy lifestyles on athletes' mental health. By understanding this relationship, it is hoped that it can contribute to the development of more holistic strategies and policies to support the physical and mental well-being of athletes. Through this literature review, we will compile various findings from previous research, identify existing gaps, and provide recommendations for further research and field practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes a literature review method to explore the impact of physical activity and healthy lifestyle on athletes' mental health. The literature review method was chosen because it allows researchers to systematically and comprehensively collect, analyze, and synthesize various findings from previous research (Sugiyono, 2018). The following are the detailed stages of this research:

1. **Determination of Research Objectives** At this stage, the research objectives are formulated clearly, which are to identify and analyze the relationship between physical activity, healthy lifestyle, and athletes' mental health. These objectives

include understanding the mechanisms underlying this relationship and its practical implications for the development of mental health programs for athletes.

2. **Determination of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria** Inclusion and exclusion criteria are established to ensure that only relevant and high-quality literature is analyzed. Inclusion criteria include journal articles published within the last 10 years, research focusing on athletes (both amateur and professional), studies examining the impact of physical activity and healthy lifestyle on mental health, and articles available in English and Indonesian. Exclusion criteria include articles that have not undergone peer review, studies not involving athlete samples, and articles that do not provide empirical data or research results.
3. **Literature Search Strategy** Literature search strategies are conducted through academic databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR. Keywords used in the search include "physical activity," "healthy lifestyle," "mental health," "athletes," "depression," "anxiety," "stress management," and "quality of life." These keyword combinations are used to obtain more specific and relevant search results.
4. **Literature Collection and Screening** Articles found through the initial search will be screened based on their titles and abstracts. Articles that meet the inclusion criteria will be downloaded and read in full to ensure their relevance. Data collected from the screened articles include information on research methodology, samples, variables examined, research findings, and main conclusions.
5. **Data Analysis and Synthesis** Data from selected articles will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative analysis involves identifying the main themes that emerge from the literature, such as the most beneficial types of physical activity, the most influential components of a healthy lifestyle, and the mechanisms through which physical activity and healthy lifestyle affect mental health. Quantitative analysis involves evaluating the effect sizes reported in these studies.
6. **Study Quality Assessment** Each study included in the analysis will be assessed for its quality using appropriate assessment tools, such as the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale for observational studies or the Cochrane risk-of-bias tool for randomized controlled trials. This quality assessment is important to ensure that the conclusions drawn are based on strong and reliable evidence.
7. **Report Compilation and Conclusion** The results of the literature analysis and synthesis will be compiled into a research report. This report will include a comprehensive literature review, analysis of the main findings, discussion of the implications of the findings for theory and practice, and recommendations for further research. Conclusions will be formulated based on the available evidence, highlighting the relationship between physical activity, healthy lifestyle, and athletes' mental health.

By following these stages, it is expected that this research will provide in-depth and comprehensive insights into the impact of physical activity and healthy lifestyle on

athletes' mental health, and contribute to the development of more effective intervention strategies in supporting athletes' mental well-being.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research utilized a literature review method to explore the impact of physical activity and healthy lifestyle on athletes' mental health. The findings of this research were obtained through the analysis of various relevant and high-quality literature. The following are the main findings of this study:

1. **The Impact of Physical Activity on Athletes' Mental Health** Physical activity has been proven to have a significant positive impact on athletes' mental health (Lam et al., 2020). Some key findings include:
 - a. **Reduction in Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety:** Studies indicate that athletes who engage in regular physical activity experience a significant reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety compared to those who are less physically active. Physical activity helps release endorphins and serotonin hormones, which play a role in improving mood and emotional well-being.
 - b. **Improvement in Mood and Well-being:** Regular exercise is associated with an increase in mood and overall well-being. Athletes report feeling happier, having higher energy levels, and experiencing reduced stress levels after participating in physical activities.
 - c. **Better Sleep Quality:** Physical activity helps improve sleep quality, which in turn contributes to better mental health. Sufficient and high-quality sleep allows for optimal physical and mental recovery for athletes.
 2. **The Role of Healthy Lifestyle in Athletes' Mental Health** A healthy lifestyle, which includes balanced nutrition, stress management, and positive living habits, has a significant influence on athletes' mental health (Taheri, Esmaeili, et al., 2023):
 - a. **Balanced Nutrition:** A balanced and nutritionally rich diet supports optimal brain function and helps in stress management. Studies show that athletes who consume nutritious foods have lower levels of anxiety and depression compared to those who consume less healthy foods.
 - b. **Stress Management:** Stress management techniques, such as meditation, yoga, and breathing exercises, have been proven effective in reducing stress and improving athletes' mental well-being. Stress management programs integrated into athletes' training routines help them cope with competitive pressure and maintain emotional balance.
 - c. **Avoidance of Bad Habits:** Avoiding bad habits such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption also contributes to better mental health. Athletes who steer clear of these habits tend to have more stable mental health and a lower risk of mental disorders.
 3. **Psychosocial Factors and Athletes' Mental Health** Psychosocial factors such as social support, training environment, and competitive pressure also play a role in athletes' mental health (De Souza, Esopenko, Conway, Todaro, & Buckman, 2021):
 - a. **Social Support:** Support from coaches, teammates, family, and friends has been shown to have a protective effect on athletes' mental health. Athletes who feel supported tend to be more resilient to stress and have better mental health.
 - b.
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Training Environment: A positive and supportive training environment contributes to athletes' mental well-being. Coaches who pay attention to athletes' mental health, provide constructive feedback, and create a fun training atmosphere help athletes maintain their mental health. c. Competitive Pressure: The pressure to perform can be a significant source of stress for athletes. However, with appropriate support and effective stress management strategies, athletes can overcome this pressure and maintain their mental health.

These findings highlight the importance of physical activity, healthy lifestyle, and psychosocial factors in promoting athletes' mental health. By addressing these factors, coaches, sports organizations, and support staff can contribute to the overall well-being of athletes and enhance their performance on and off the field.

Athletes' mental health is a critical yet often overlooked aspect in the sports world, which tends to focus on physical achievement (Malm, Jakobsson, & Isaksson, 2019). As an athlete strives to achieve their best performance, the physical and psychological pressures they experience can often lead to stress, anxiety, and even depression. In efforts to enhance athletes' overall well-being, it's important to understand the crucial role played by physical activity and healthy lifestyles in maintaining their mental health (Snedden et al., 2019).

Physical activity, in its various forms, has long been recognized to have significant impacts on mental health (Taheri, Irandoust, et al., 2023). When individuals engage in regular exercise, their bodies release endorphins, neurotransmitters responsible for feelings of happiness and relaxation. For athletes, routine exercise not only helps improve their physical condition but also brings about significant psychological benefits (Zhou et al., 2022). Studies indicate that athletes engaged in regular physical activity tend to have lower levels of anxiety and depression and overall better moods.

However, the benefits of physical activity cannot be separated from overall healthy lifestyles. Proper nutrition, adequate rest, and effective stress management are essential components of athletes' mental health (Briguglio et al., 2020). A balanced and nutrient-rich diet provides the necessary fuel for the brain and body to function optimally. Additionally, good stress management helps athletes cope with competitive pressure and maintain their emotional balance amidst the challenges they face (Shpakou et al., 2022).

Moreover, psychosocial factors also play a crucial role in athletes' mental health. Social support from coaches, teammates, and family provides vital resources for athletes to cope with stress and difficulties they may encounter. A positive and supportive training environment also contributes to athletes' mental well-being (Sokić, Popov, Dinić, & Rastović, 2021). When athletes feel supported and valued, they tend to have higher motivation and cope with challenges more effectively.

However, it's important to acknowledge that each athlete is a unique individual with different needs and responses to pressure and stimulation. Therefore, a personalized approach to mental health care is crucial (Trigueros et al., 2020). Training programs and interventions should be tailored to individual needs, taking into account factors such as the

type of sport they engage in, the level of competition, and their psychological conditions (Hita, Kushartanti, Ariestika, Widiyanto, & Nizeyumukiza, 2021).

In this context, research using literature review methods paves the way for a deeper understanding of the impact of physical activity and healthy lifestyles on athletes' mental health (Caponnetto et al., 2021). By exploring various findings from previous research, we can identify trends, knowledge gaps, and recommendations for best practices in supporting athletes' mental well-being. It is hoped that this research will be a starting point in the development of holistic strategies that not only enhance athletes' physical performance but also maintain their mental health in the long run.

CONCLUSION

Using the literature review method, this study highlights the importance of physical activity and healthy lifestyles in maintaining athletes' mental health. Findings indicate that regular physical activity and healthy lifestyles can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, as well as improve mood and overall well-being. Psychosocial factors, such as social support and positive training environments, also play a crucial role in maintaining athletes' mental health.

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