

Attrition of regular sport participation in adolescent New Zealand females

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Introduction

Benefits of sport:

- Sport has been proved to have many physical, social and psychological benefits especially when participation begins at an early age and is continued throughout adolescence and adulthood (Krustrup, Dvorak, Junge & Bangsbo, 2010; Vandendriessche, et al., 2012).

Female sport participation:

- Various studies have found that female participation in sport and physical activity peak at approximately fourteen years of age, but sharply declines in the years that follow, meaning the benefits that sport provides will be lacking (Eime, Harvey, Charity & Payne, 2016)

Practical application:

- By identifying key reasons for attrition of sport participation in 15-17 year-old female New Zealanders, this may prevent the attrition of sport, ensuring the benefits of sport participation will continue to occur throughout their life, eventually producing a healthier population.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the key reasons for attrition of regular sport participation in adolescent New Zealand females to provide evidence which can be used to prevent attrition in future.

Methods

Participants:

49 female participants aged between 19 and 26 years-old who attended various New Zealand high-schools completed a questionnaire. All participants participated in sport for less than two hours a week when aged 15-17 years-old.

Procedures:

Participants provided consent regarding their participation prior to completing the online survey. The questionnaire required reflection of each individuals sporting participation and associated factors between the ages of 15 and 17 years-old.

Findings

This study found that as the participants aged, the time spent participating in sport decreased, this is shown in figure 1. Although participation in sport decreased with age, only 3% of participants claimed to not like sport at all, with 41% claiming to like sport 'very much'.

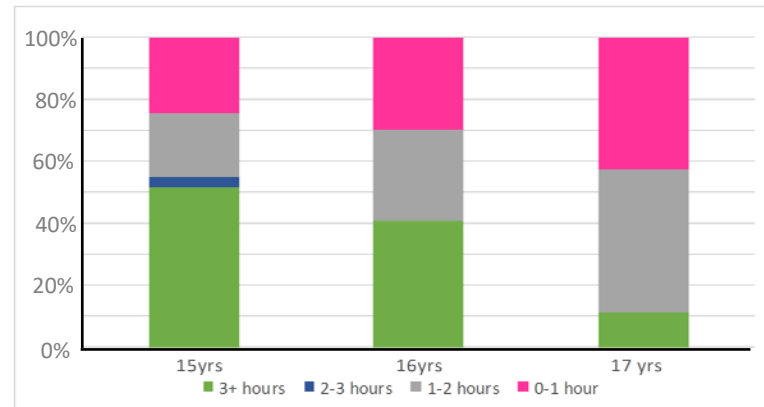


Figure 1: Time spent participating in sport by age

The most common reason participants believed they dropped out of sport was due to competing commitments, such as school, work and family. This study found that the main priorities for both the participants and their parents were schooling/ studies, with no-one having sport as a priority individually. When asked about factors that may have encouraged their participation, the most common response was to have more parental support, whether it be financial, encouragement or transport, these responses are shown in figure 2.

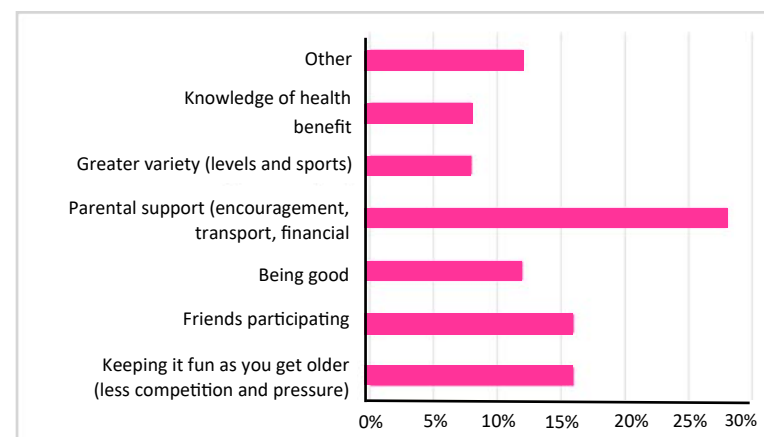


Figure 2: Aspects that would have encouraged sporting participation

This study discovered that the main reason participants did not participate in a sports club was that they considered themselves to be 'not good enough'. When asked about personal confidence, 68% of participants were either 'not confident' or 'not at all confident' in their sporting ability as shown in figure 3. It was also found that 84% of participants worried about failing or making mistakes 'about half of the time' or more often than this.

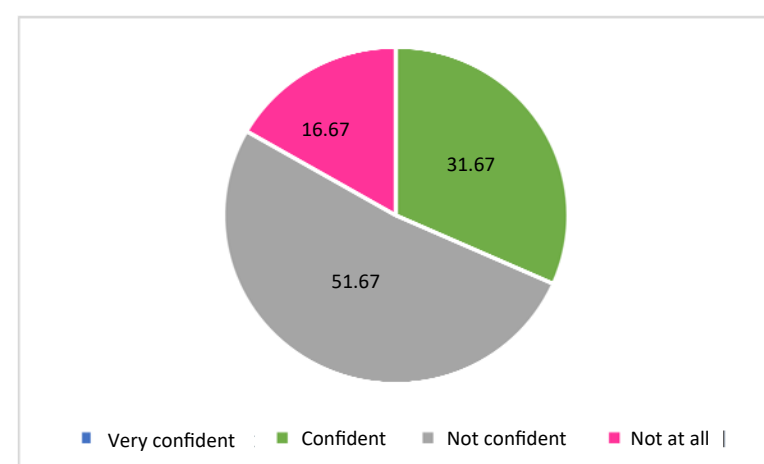


Figure 3: Self-confidence in sporting ability

Discussion

- The lack of confidence in sporting ability identified in this study is supported by Crane and Temple (2015) who found that perception of confidence to be one of the five major attrition areas identified; lack of enjoyment, perceptions of competence, social pressures, physical factors and competing priorities.

- A lack of confidence is consistent with the findings of Crane and Temple (2015) who concluded that key intra-personal constraints for sport attrition included fear of failure and poor self-confidence.

- Participants believed the main reason for attrition of sport was that they had other commitments. Both the participants and their parents prioritised studies and schooling as well as work and family commitments, which took priority over sport participation. This supported the findings of Crane and Temple (2015) who identified competing priorities to be another one of the five major sport attrition areas.

Conclusions

The key findings of this study were that the main reason for attrition from sport in 15-17 year-old females were; ability perception, lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes, family support and competing priorities such as studies and work. This study had both similarities and differences to previous literature on surrounding topics, hence a need for further research in the area. This study was useful in providing information on key reasons for attrition of sport in 15-17 year-old females which can be used to prevent attrition in the future.

References

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