

## EVALUATING EFFECTS OF SPORT ON DEPRESSION

### SPORUN DEPRESYON ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİNİN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

<sup>1</sup>Meriç ERASLAN\*

<sup>1</sup>Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi, Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Yüksekokulu, Spor Yöneticiliği Bölümü,  
Burdur, Türkiye

\* [mericeraslan@mehmetakif.edu.tr](mailto:mericeraslan@mehmetakif.edu.tr)

#### ABSTRACT

It is known that participating in sport activities has positive effects on human health and these activities are also beneficial to society. It is observed that the studies on sports have increased because sport activities are beneficial both individually and socially. The fact that it is revealed that sport activities have psychological benefits has contributed to increase in research about this field. When evaluating research findings in the literature, it is seen that principal benefits of sport activities are to decrease depression, to minimize stress and anxiety levels, to support psychological strength and to increase morale and motivation. It is aimed to examine beneficial effects of participation in sport activities on depression in this study.

**Keywords:** Sport, psychological structure, depression

#### ÖZET

Spor etkinliklerine katılımın insan sağlığı üzerinde olumlu etkileri olduğu, bunun yanında spor etkinliklerinin toplumsal açıdan da birçok faydası olduğu bilinmektedir. Gerek bireysel gerekse de toplumsal açıdan birçok faydası bulunduğu için spor üzerine yapılan araştırmalarda artış gözlemlendiği görülmektedir. Spor etkinliklerinin özellikle psikolojik açıdan faydalarının ortaya çıkması bu alanda yapılan araştırmalarda da artış meydana gelmesine katkı sağlamıştır. Literatürde yer alan araştırma bulguları değerlendirildiği zaman spor etkinliklerinin psikolojik faydalarının başında depresyonun azaltılması, stres ve kaygı düzeyinin en aza indirilmesi, psikolojik sağlamlığın desteklenmesi, moral ve motivasyonun yükseltilmesi gibi faydaların geldiği görülmektedir. Yapılan bu araştırmada spora katılımın depresyon üzerindeki faydalarının incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Spor, psikolojik yapı, depresyon

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#### INTRODUCTION

Depression is a mood disorder. Mood is a dominant and continuous emotional tone that is experienced internally and changes the way a person perceives the world and his/her behaviors (Karamustafalıoğlu & Yumrukcal, 2011). According to the report published in 2001 by The World Health Organization (WHO), 340 million people experienced depression in accordance with clinic definitions in the report (WHO 2001). In the same report, it is estimated that depression would take the first place among disorders affecting working life by the year 2020 (Basogul and Buldukoglu, 2015). In this regard, depression is one of the most important psychological problems that threaten community health care. While it causes premature death and negative results such as deterioration in general health status when it is not treated, it is possible to increase life quality of the patient when it is properly diagnosed and treated (Helvacı-Celik & Hocaoglu, 2016).

It is possible to divide symptoms of depression to 4 subgroups: 1) Mood symptoms; depressed mood, the state of being in low spirits or unhappy which is seen by others and continuation of this state throughout the day and almost every day; 2) Cognitive symptoms; feeling worthless or useless, concerning for the future 3) Somatic symptoms; appetite and sleep disorders; 4) Motor symptoms; slowing down in movements and agitation. Anhedoni is a state in which

patients do not enjoy activities and stimulus that they previously liked and this state can not be included to any subgroup clearly (Gonul, 2012).

The concept of sport is as old as the emergence of humanity. The sport is expressed as one of the important elements of communal living. The importance of the sport is gradually increasing because it has acquired different dimensions along with developed economical conditions, over-urbanization, rapidly developed industrialization, the fact that people look for more leisure and health concerns. Although sports activities mostly take place for professional purposes, they are also highly preferred activities by individuals who aim to increase their standards of living and health (Koruc & Bayar, 2004). Studies conducted in recent years have shown that participation in sports activities has positive effects on psychological health problems. The current study aims to examine effects of participation in sport activities on depression which is commonly seen in public.

### **The Concept of Sport and its Importance**

The root of sport word is based on the words of Desport or Disportare in Latin. Towards the 17th century, the concept of "sport" emerged by changing the letters at the beginning of these words. In today's world, where contemporary society is dominant, activities such as running, walking or competition come to the mind when the sport is in question. On the other hand, the sport is not only running, walking, cycling, swimming or a competition (Heper, 2012). The sport, which requires physical, mental and technique performance to win a competition or to defeat an opponent and which raises aesthetic worry in spectators, is a phenomenon nested with psychology, physiology and biomechanic fields (Coban & Unveren, 2007). When considered conceptually, the sport is mental and physical activities that are performed individually or collectively to achieve the specified goal or the struggle with another under predetermined rules both to perform the competition and to enjoy the viewer. The main attention here is that physical and mental activities take place in the framework of a set of rules. The variety of physical and mental activities has divided sport to different branches (Tanriverdi, 2012).

When considered with a philosophical standpoint, the sport is a field of knowledge which scrutinises the truth conceptually, essence of the sport and which reinterprets the concept with sport sciences and philosophical values. When considered sociologically, the sport studies on social structure, social behaviors and social effects of sports by exchanging with other scientific fields within the framework of certain theories. According to Turkish Language Society dictionary, the sport is the name given to all bodily movements applied according to pre-determined rules generally on the basis of a competition which is performed individually or with a group. In other words, the sport is carried out in a certain period of time in search of a record in a certain environment with a number of special tools and equipment (Heper, 2012).

Participating in sport activities is important for people in terms of many aspects. The conducted studies have revealed that participating in sport activities has positive effects on physical (Shedd et al., 2007; Heideman et al., 2013), psychological (Hamer & Chida, 2009; Armstrong & Oomen-Early, 2009) and social development (Yaman, 2015). Furthermore, the

studies have shown that participation in sport activities has positive contributions to body composition (Kelley & Kelley, 2006; Khalife et al., 2014), metabolic diseases (Sigal et al., 2007; Yesil & Altok, 2012) and life quality (Mock et al., 2001; Duda et al., 2014). As it can be understood from the information in the literature, the phenomenon of the sport takes an important place in human life.

Sportive activities have positive contributions to physical and psychological health and also it has become a tool socializing people and increasing responsibility and solidarity emotions. Factors supporting psycho-social development in within the scope of sport activities are basic elements make the sport activities a socializing tool. The fact that the individual participates in sport activities prevents him / her from being lonely and provides him / her a non monotonous life standard. Thus, contributions of the sport to socialize is an undeniable fact (Kucuk & Koc, 2004). Thanks to these characteristics of the sport, sport activities are considered as a useful thing for people in terms of both socially and individually.

### **The Effects of the Sport on Depression**

The most important purpose of sportive activities is the desire to achieve determined goal and to win. It can be said that the sport does not only contribute to physical and mental development but it also includes struggling, excitement, competition and ambition of winning (Tanriverdi, 2012). The sport activities which are effective in preventing psychological problems have an important role in preserving mental health. According to the studies in the literature, participation in sport activities has positive contributions to mental health and depression. Experimental research findings have shown that it is less common that people working out experience depression when comparing people working out and those do not (Arslan et al., 2011).

As known, sedentary lifestyles increases the likelihood of people going into depression (Roshanaei-Moghaddam et al., 2009, 306). From this perspective, participating in sport activities is important for fighting against depression. Participating in sport and physical activities has positive contributions to mental health and depression (Teychenne et al., 2008, 397; McKercher et al., 2009, 161). Again, according to another study conducted, when comparing people working out and those do not, the level of going into depression of those working out is a lower possibility (Arslan et al., 2011, 122). The study conducted by Canan & Ataoglu (2010) shows participating in sport activities is a crucial factor in fighting with depression and especially participating in team sport contributes to decreasing depression level. Many studies in the literature underline that participating in the sport activities decrease depression risk and minimize symptoms of depression (DiLorenzo et al., 1999; King et al., 1993; Dunn vd., 2005).

### **Results**

When examining experimental research findings, it is seen that participating in sport activities prevents depression and decreases depressive symptoms. Due to these properties, sport events have been started to be used widespread in the treatment of depression. In this context, it can

be said that it is beneficial to get the public adopt working out habit for fighting with depression.

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