

Research Paper :

A study of health locus of control among Athletes of the Indian Universities

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to compare the psychological, variables upon health beliefs, (health locus of control), on 350 male and female University track and field athletes. The collected data were analyzed using Z test to find out the significance of differences between the high and low performance of male and female athletes on psychological variables. The finding of the statistical analysis revealed that the major finding in contrast to study was that high and low performance of female athletes showed statistically significance differences ($P < 0.01$) on internal health locus of control. It has been depicted that there were no differences on powerful others and chance health locus of control and dimension of health locus of control.

Key words : Health locus of control, Z test, High and low performance

Human being is a complex creature and illness can be caused by multitude factors, not just a single factor such as virus or bacterium. Health psychologists study a broad range of variables including health beliefs, genotype, cardiovascular diseases, smoking habits, religious beliefs, alcohol use, social support, living conditions, emotional state, social class and much more. Health psychologists conduct research to identify behaviours and experiences that promote health, give rise to illness and influence the effectiveness of health care. They also recommend ways to improve health care and health-care policy

It is important to investigate the health behaviours among track and field athletes. Health behaviours are under taken by people to enhance or maintain their health. Poor health behaviours are important not only because they are implicated in illness but also because they may easily become poor health habits. A health habit is a health related behaviour that is firmly established and often performed automatically, because it was reinforced by specific positive outcomes such as parental approval coach and physical education teacher. It eventually becomes independent of the reinforcement process and also maintained by the environment. Health related behaviours in early life influences later risks for lifestyle related disorder.

It makes sense to focus on them in study of association between health and different health habits in order to improve health promotion activities targeting this group. It would also help to develop health education initiatives targeting the behaviours of athletes.

The concept of health locus of control was derived

from the social learning theory developed by Rotter in 1966. Health locus of control (HLC) is one of the most widely measured parameters of health being for the planning of health education programme, which evaluates whether individuals regard their health as controllable by them (e.g. 'I am directly responsible for my health'), they believe their health is not controllable by them is in the hands of fate (e.g. 'whether I am well or not is a matter of luck'), or they regard their health as under the control of powerful others (e.g. 'I can only do what my doctor tells me to do'). Health locus of control has been related to whether individuals change their behaviour (e.g. give up smoking) and the kind of communication style they require from health professionals. Wallston *et al.* (1978) recognized that there was difficulty in predicting health behaviour specifically from generalized expectancy measures such as Rotter's I-Escale (1966). The Multidimensional Health Locus of Control (MHLC) scale was developed by Wallston *et al.* (1978). The MHLC has been used as a predictor of health behaviour to explore how to best tailor interventions to target populations. The MHLC consists of three different sub-scales each of which assesses the three specific factors known to determine health behaviour. (Wallston *et al.*, 1978).

METHODOLOGY

The sample for the present study consisted of 350 University level male and female athletes (145 high and 205 low performance track and field athletes) who were randomly recruited from the 67th All India Inter-University Athletic Championship held at Sree Kanteerva Stadium, Bangalore (25-29 Jan., 2007) under the auspices of