

Abstract

Exercise addiction is becoming a recognized concern, particularly prevalent in elite athletic environments where the pursuit of perfection is emphasized. Despite growing awareness of problematic exercise behaviors, research investigating the underlying risk factors remains limited. This study aimed to examine personality predictors of exercise addiction in Czech elite athletes. A sample of 168 competitive athletes, aged 18 to 30 years, completed assessments including the Exercise Addiction Inventory, Sport Motivation Scale-6, the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale, Performance Perfectionism Scale-Sport, and the Neuroticism Scale from Big Five Inventory. In terms of prevalence, the findings revealed that 16.5 % of athletes exhibited problematic signs of exercise addiction, while 76.7 % were potentially at risk with low severity of symptoms. No significant differences were observed between different groups of sports. Using multiple linear regression, the study demonstrated a significant overall effect of personality predictors on exercise addiction. Neuroticism, introjected regulation, and athletic identity were identified as significant predictors of exercise addiction. These findings highlight the importance of psychological factors such as personality traits and motivational regulation in understanding exercise addiction among athletes. The exceptionally high prevalence points to a discrepancy in the diagnosis of exercise dependence and inconsistent use of diagnostic tools, so the results must be interpreted with caution.

Key words: exercise addiction; personality; elite sport; perfectionism; neuroticism; athletic identity; sport motivation