

The Impact of Motivation Type on Adolescent Swimmers' Perception of Training Load During the Summer Competitive Season

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Abstract

Motivation significantly influences how athletes perceive and respond to training demands. Especially in youth sport, motivation can act as a protective or risk factor in relation to overtraining. This study investigated the relationship between types of motivation and perceived overtraining symptoms in adolescent competitive swimmers. The sample included 85 swimmers (aged 12–18, $M = 14.57$; 50 boys, 35 girls) from 22 Czech clubs competing at the national level. A longitudinal design was used, with five repeated measurements during the summer part of competitive season (January–June). Motivation was assessed via the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS-28), Perception of Success Questionnaire (POSQ), and Achievement Motive Scale – Sport (AMS-sport); overtraining symptoms were measured by the Training Distress Scale (TDS) and Brunel Mood Scale (BRUMS). Data analysis included bivariate and repeated measures correlations. Intrinsic and success-oriented motivation were linked to lower overtraining symptoms, while amotivation and avoidance-focused profiles predicted higher distress. No significant associations were found for extrinsic motivation or task/ego orientation. Gender differences were nonsignificant. Findings highlight the importance of fostering intrinsic and success-oriented motivation in adolescent athletes to support resilience and reduce overtraining risk. These insights may help coaches and sport psychologists design motivational strategies that support long-term performance and wellbeing.

Keywords

Motivation, overtraining, adolescent athletes, competitive swimming, training distress, longitudinal study.