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Mindfulness – a new trend in competitive sports

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Introduction: Numerous studies have already proven the positive impact of mindfulness-based interventions on different psychological functions, for example well-being, cognitive skills, fear and stress. The aim of the following review is to illustrate the current state of research, as well as the results of all publications that had been taken into consideration regarding mindfulness-based interventions in competitive sports.

Methodology: Three databases (Web of Science, PubMed and PubPsych) were searched for relevant studies. Selected studies were analyzed regarding the type of sport, the participants (group size, age, and sex), the interventions (duration, intensity, and components), the reported parameters in a sporting context and the effect sizes.

Findings: After having applied specific criteria for the selection (e.g. mindfulness-based training as independent variable, athletic performance as dependent variable, existence of a control group) only three randomized controlled studies remained. The analysis of these three studies indicates that one can presume a positive effect of mindfulness-based interventions on flow experience and athletic performance during competitions.

Outlook: Until now, there is very limited scientific research about the implications of mindfulness-based interventions on motor performance in competitive sports. More theory driven studies have to follow in order to investigate the measurable effects of mindfulness on the actual athletic performance.

Biography

Sabine Hoja studied Molecular Medicine at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg. In January 2017, she finished her PhD in Natural Sciences within the Biomedical International Graduate School Biomedigs at Regensburg University Hospital. For her Doctoral thesis (topic: the molecular mode of action of the drug valproic acid on glioma cells) she received the Helga-Reifert-Price for experimental cancer research in October 2016. Now, she works as a Postdoc at the Institute of Sport Science in Regensburg. Her research focuses on the biological and molecular aspects of mindfulness and mindfulness-based interventions, especially in a sporting context.

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