

THE LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM IN 14–16-YEAR – OLD FEMALE TENNIS PLAYERS

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Annotation. *Purpose:* The level of self esteem in 14–16-year–old female tennis players. *Material:* The main aim of the study was to determine the level of self-esteem among 14–16-year–old girls practising tennis in comparison to their peers not engaged in sport on a regular basis. The study involved two groups of girls: those practising tennis competitively (n=30) and those not training sports systematically (n=30). The subjects' age was in the range of 14–16 years old and their training experience 3–6 years. The level of self-esteem was determined by means of Morris Rosenberg's questionnaire in the Polish modification. *Results:* As a result of the conducted study significant differences in the level of self-esteem between the tested groups and a correlation with their training experience were found. As a result of the conducted study, it was found that both groups of girls represented the level of self-esteem defined as average (tennis players – 29.9 points; non-training girls – 26.4 points). However, these differences were statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$) to the advantage of tennis players. *Conclusions:* Statistically significant differences were found between the level of self-esteem among girls training tennis and their peers not practising sports regularly (to the advantage of the former ones). Far more (almost twice as many) tennis players achieved a high level of self-esteem in comparison to girls who do not systematically practise sports. None of the examined tennis players represented a low level of self-esteem. The length of training experience has a statistically significant, positive correlation with the level of tennis players' self-esteem.

Keywords: tennis, self-esteem, girls, training.

Introduction

Positive self-esteem in all its aspects is a very important factor in a favourable adjustment of an individual to the environment and a criterion of self-satisfaction. In the course of one's life a human being learns about and evaluates the surrounding world and collects experience of one's own person. These experiences accumulate during the individual's development since the first years of life. They are becoming gradually sorted out, which in turn leads to forming certain ideas about oneself [1].

Sports activity, in addition to shaping the physical development, also affects the shaping of personality, the development of the skill of an actual assessment of one's own abilities. With age, practising sport contributes to accepting more and more difficult and demanding aims and to increasing one's abilities and expectations [3, 17].

These issues are particularly important in tennis. Therefore, the main aim of the study was to determine the level of self-esteem in 14–16-year–old girls practising tennis in comparison to their peers not engaged in sport on a regular basis. Thus clarified purpose implies answering the following research questions:

- 1) What level of self-esteem do the studied tennis players represent?
- 2) Are there statistically significant differences in self-esteem between the tennis players and girls of the same age who do not train sport competitively?
- 3) Is there a correlation between the training experience and the tennis players' self-esteem level?

Material and methods

To define the level of self-esteem, Morris Rosenberg's questionnaire in the Polish modification was used [10]. The questionnaire contains 10 diagnostic statements, and responses are evaluated on a scale of 1–4. The measured self-esteem has a global character and is treated as a constant trait rather than a temporary condition. Questions 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 were scored as follows: the answer "definitely agree" – 4 points, "I agree" – 3 points, "I do not agree" – 2 points, "I definitely do not I agree" – 1 point. In turn, questions 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 had the inverse point value for answers to questions. The following ranges of self-esteem were adopted: low (0–20 points), average (21–30 points), high (31–40 points).

The study involved 30 girls aged 14–16 years (15.2 ± 0.8) regularly training tennis. Their training experience ranged between 3–6 years (4.6 ± 1.1). The comparative group comprised 30 girls aged 14–16 years (15.1 ± 0.8) attending Tricity middle schools who did not train sports regularly.

The study was carried out in March 2015. The non-training girls filled in the questionnaire individually before a Physical Education lesson, while the training persons – before a training session.

Results

As a result of the conducted study, it was found that both groups of girls represented the level of self-esteem defined as average (tennis players – 29.9 points; non-training girls – 26.4 points). However, these differences were statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$) to the advantage of tennis players.

The greatest difference regarded the statement: "I believe that I am a valuable person at least to the same extent as others" (23 pts. in favour of girls training tennis – the difference in the sum of points obtained for the

statement for the entire sample). Persons not training sports regularly gained a slight advantage (9 pts. – the difference in the sum of the points for the statement for the entire sample) only in one statement: "Generally, I'm tempted to believe that I'm not successful".

Sixteen persons in each group obtained an average level of self-esteem (Fig. 1). Fourteen tennis players and eight non-training girls had a high level of self-esteem and only girls not practising sports regularly represented a low level.

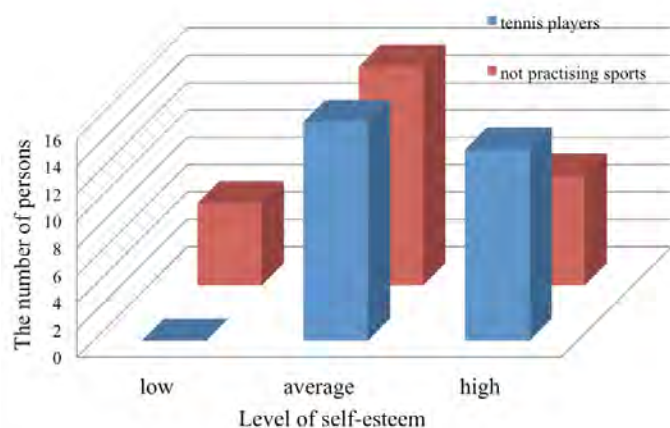


Figure 1. Distribution of the level of self-esteem among tennis players and girls not practising sports (n=30, n=30, respectively).

In addition, the study proved a statistically significant relationship, at a high level, between the level of self-esteem and the length of training experience ($r=0.72$).

Discussion

Numerous studies confirm that physical activity has an impact on the increase in the level of self-esteem [2, 6, 8, 15, 19]. Some papers are related to the level of adolescents' self-esteem with reference to e.g.: BMI, the parents' wealth [7], satisfaction with physical appearance [16], eating disorders and habits [12], depression and social anxiety [18].

A type of self-esteem is important for many aspects of sports life. The most desirable is high self-esteem, but at the same time stable and adequate [9, 13, 14].

This study has revealed higher self-esteem, at a statistically significant level, among girls practising tennis. Sports-active girls have higher self-esteem and thus have an advantage in interpersonal skills, and they can find themselves better in difficult situations [5]. Self-esteem in which "the ideal I" is close to "the real I" is not easy to achieve, but the conducted study shows that training tennis contributes to self-acceptance, motivates to action and encourages to accepting increasingly difficult challenges, having regard to one's real potential. Self-esteem largely refers to what an individual feels about himself or herself [20].

A person practising tennis must properly assess his/her own level of training, choose appropriate objectives and select appropriate ways to achieve them [11]. A person with a high level of self-esteem expects to have an ability to perform a difficult task. He or she believes that what he or she is doing is close to ideal. Such individuals are characterized by boldness, self-confidence, establishing social contacts easier. In the peer group they start discussions on their own initiative and actively participate in them [17].

Self-acceptance means a positive attitude to oneself and definitely a conscious contact with everything that is and what manifests itself in own emotions, thoughts, deeds and desires. The self-acceptance in question does not eliminate noticing one's own mistakes and flaws; it does not mean uncritical looking at the self either [4].

Conclusions

As a result of the conducted study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) Statistically significant differences were found between the level of self-esteem among girls training tennis and their peers not practising sports regularly (to the advantage of the former ones).
- 2) Far more (almost twice as many) tennis players achieved a high level of self-esteem in comparison to girls who do not systematically practise sports. None of the examined tennis players represented a low level of self-esteem.
- 3) The length of training experience has a statistically significant, positive correlation with the level of tennis players' self-esteem.

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