The investigation of the relationship between body dysmorphic disorder and psychological problems and comprise it among female athletes and non athletes students

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to compare the body dysmorphic disorder and investigate the relationship between the sub-scale of the psychological problems and body dysmorphic disorder of the athletes and nonathletes university girl students. The subjects of the research comprise 60 individuals whose ages are between 19- 25. The instruments used to collect data for the dependant variable included a personal information, BICI and SCL90 questionnaires. The results showed that the body dysmorphic disorder of the athletes are better than nonathletes and the relationship between body dysmorphic disorder and all of sub-scales of psychological problems in nonathletes is higher than athletes.

Keywords: body dysmorphic disorder, athletes and nonathletes psychological problems, university girl students.

1. Introduction

Human being has different aspects. Generally human being can be studied in two explicit and implicit aspects. However, study of two aspects in the same time and condition may be more complex and difficult than studying each one separately. In body and mind interaction issue we encounter with “personality” and “self” terms. Personality both includes those characteristics which makes person unique and distinct from others and those characteristics common among human beings (Phillips et al, 2008).

Women are among vulnerable groups of society which have special features in health and care issues, thus accurate understanding of their needs with regard to their personal and social condition and their status in society is necessary. Physiological condition of women makes them vulnerable humans. This condition including maturation, pregnancy, breast-feeding and menopause necessitates paying special attention to women regarding safety provision (Mohammadi & Sajadinejad, 2008).
Body image includes one’s perceptions of himself/herself and perceptions of others towards him/her (Ghasemi & Momeni, 2006). Smith believes that each person has a body image of himself which is the main constituent of his personality. One may think he/she is slim, fat, short, long or something like that. Human behaviour and feelings are matched with the image which is created in his/her mind as a result of what he/she hears, sees and feels (Pavan et al, 2008).

Psychology health experts have done various researches on body image because of its importance in social relations and interpersonal relationships. Their findings indicate that some people have always mental engagement about their body appearance and in spite of having natural or almost natural physical appearance, they have excessive and worrying disorder of being ugly or unattractive (Philips et al, 2008). This feature is called body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) in psychology and mental pathology documents, and it is regarded as one of the physical disorder subcategories. This disorder includes severe and excessive disorder of physical appearance and feeling of imaginary defect in body (especially in face and hair) (Philips, 2000).

Results of researches report that if women don’t have good feeling about their physical appearance and think that colleagues evaluate their appearance negatively, they would become depressed and have poor social performance (Ghasemi et al, 2010). Most researches have shown that BDD is more prevalent among students and college students (male and female). It seems that continuous physical activity has compensatory effect with regard to body dysmorphic disorder in girls, so that different researches have shown that female athletes have much better body image compared to non athlete girls (Pecorari, 2008).

Regarding importance of body image in young girls in research literature, author aims to compare body dysmorphic disorder and relation between body dimorph and psychological disorders in female athlete and non athlete students.

2. Research Methodology

Research subjects are female athlete and non athlete students from Tehran University, 30 subjects were selected from each group. Research tool includes Body Image Concern Inventory (BICI) which was composed of 19 questions and designed by Littleton, Axsom, Cynthia and pury (2005) and has been validated and normalized by Basaknejad and Ghafari (2008) in Iran. The other questionnaire used in this research was a 90 questions form (SCL90) including 9 categories which are as following: Somatization, Obsessive-Compulsive, Interpersonal sensitivity, Depression, Anxiety, Aggression, Phobic Anxiety, Paranoid, Psychotism and extra questions category.

Prior to variable measurements, responsible people introduced themselves and mentioned points which don’t provide much data for subjects about research goals. After description, personal information, BICI and SCL-90 questionnaires were distributed among subjects and after filling gathered. In order to avoid results bias, providing extra explanation about questionnaire questions for subjects was refrained. Questionnaires were also distributed by someone other than investigator. One-Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov Test was used for data statistical analysis in order to determine data distribution normality in each group. Then, for gathered data (regarding accepted parametric statistics presuppositions) independent group T statistical test was used for comparing body dysmorphic disorder and psychological problems. In order to analyze relationship between body dysmorphic disorder and psychological problems in two groups, Pearson statistic test and for comparing this relationship in two groups Fisher Z test were used.
3. Results

As it shown in figure 1, there is significant difference between Athletes (M= 29.78 & SD= 5.66) and non athletes (M= 22.49 & SD= 9.12) in BDD.

Table 1. Pearson and Fisher Z test results for relationship between body dysmorphic disorder and physical complaints in two groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters</th>
<th>athletes</th>
<th>Non-athletes</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal sensitivity</td>
<td>0/24</td>
<td>+0/013</td>
<td>0/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>0/04</td>
<td>+0/53</td>
<td>0/009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>0/6</td>
<td>-0/11</td>
<td>0/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>0/032</td>
<td>+0/023</td>
<td>0/054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phobic Anxiety</td>
<td>0/01</td>
<td>+0/78</td>
<td>0/001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paranoid</td>
<td>0/41</td>
<td>+0/08</td>
<td>0/001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychotic</td>
<td>0/06</td>
<td>+0/56</td>
<td>0/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsessive-Compulsive</td>
<td>0/04</td>
<td>+0/49</td>
<td>0/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatization</td>
<td>0/045</td>
<td>+0/63</td>
<td>0/03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen in table 1, correlation coefficient was in 9 sub criteria of two groups indicating significant relationship between these two factors in two groups. Regarding correlation coefficients difference of two groups and value obtained from Fisher Z formula, it was found that there is significant difference between correlation coefficient of BDD and psychological problems sub scale in female athlete and non athlete students. In other words, relationship between BDD and physical complaints in female non athlete students is significantly more than this relationship in female athlete students.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to compare the relationship between BDD and psychological problems in female athlete and non athlete students. With regard to comparison of BDD in female athlete and non athlete students, results obtained in this research indicate that BDD in female athlete students is significantly better than non athlete females. Relationships between psychological problems sub criteria and BDD in non athlete students is significantly higher than athlete students.
Research findings indicate that high percentage of college students are not satisfied with their physical appearance and are willing to change their physical appearance (Phillips, 2000). High percentages of these students also have body dysmorphic or body image disorder. Body appearance disorder and dissatisfaction can have effect on social performance and interpersonal relationships of people (Basaknejad and Ghafari, 2008). In this way this research findings are in consistency with Basaknejad and Ghafari (2008). They studied 263 female and male college students by BICI and SC190 questionnaires in their research. Their research results showed that there is positive and significant relationship between sub criteria of psychological problems and BDD in college students and interpersonal sensitivity and Obsessive-Compulsive behavior are considered as the best predictors of body dysmorphic disorder. Difference between this research and Basaknejad’s research is that they just studied non athlete students, but in this research we also studied athlete students and maybe the reason for hypotheses being significant in this research is physical activity variable in research subjects. This indicates that people who are more sensitive in their social relationships, shows more fear about their appearance and colleagues evaluation of their physical appearance. Therefore, there is relationship between negative mood and depression and BDD, so that sufferers don’t have pleasant feelings and feel depression because of imaginary physical defects and continual referring to physician (Pavan, 2008).

The other important issue which can be discussed as one of possible reasons for better body image of athlete females is accounting for physical exercise in research subjects. As research findings indicated, athlete group exercised 8.6h per week in average, while this was much lower (1.8 h per week) in second group. It seems that participating in physical activities act as mediator for self esteem increase and attitude toward oneself. It should be explained that participating in physical activities results in increasing physical abilities level and body fitness and this leads to change in one’s evaluation of his/her capabilities. This relationship ultimately leads to increasing self esteem and more positive perception of body. In addition, based on Exercise and Self-Esteem Model (EXSEM) model it is suggested that objective evaluation (which is basis of this model) of body performance may improve by physical activity. This leads to increasing self acceptance or self and oneself characteristics valuation regardless of perceived competency levels. Fox and Corbin by EXSEM model development demonstrated that model effectiveness resources have stronger relationship with one’s body fitness condition (Ghasemi et al, 2010).

Also Sonstrum suggested that self esteem improvement factors following physical activity may be related to physical fitness increase, goals achievement and thus better feeling of physical condition, increasing competency feeling, healthy behaviors improvement such as sleep and good nutrition and social experience confrontation due to activity with others. These factors can improve one’s self satisfaction (Bahram & Shafizade, 2003). One of potential ways for young female self perception improvement is participating in athletic and recreational activities. Since body as a mechanism causes activity appearance, participating in sporting activities has impact on physical self perception. In addition, since sporting and recreational activities take place in society and community, interaction with others and possible experience likely improves social self perception (Pooraghaee, 2006).

In other part of this research, relationship between sub criteria of psychological problems and BDD in female non athlete students is significantly higher than this relationship in female athlete students. Maybe one reason for less significant relationship between sub criteria of psychological problems and BDD in athlete students is persistent physical activity effect on improvement of both components (sub criteria of psychological problems and BDD). Various researches indicated that athlete people have psychologically healthier (Vaezmusavi, 2002) and less psychological problems (Bahram & Shafizade, 2000).

References


