

Examination of the Anxiety Levels of the Participants of the Turkish Boxing Championships About Catching COVID-19 After COVID-19: The Role of Demographic Factors

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KEYWORDS ABSTRACT

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Anxiety,
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Purpose: The main purpose of this study is to determine the anxiety levels of athletes participating in the Turkish Boxing Championship after the COVID-19 pandemic and to examine how these anxiety levels are related to demographic factors such as gender, age, national athlete status and boxing duration. The pandemic period has had various psychological effects on athletes, and it has been observed that anxiety levels are particularly high. This study will attempt to better understand these anxiety levels and to reveal how demographic factors shape anxiety.

Method: The research was carried out by adopting a quantitative pattern. The study was conducted with 89 athletes randomly selected from among the athletes participating in the 2024 Turkish Boxing Championship. The participants included 52 male and 37 female athletes, and a questionnaire was administered to each participant to measure their anxiety about contracting COVID-19. The questionnaire collected demographic factors such as age, gender, national athlete status, and boxing duration, along with anxiety levels about COVID-19. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA tests.

Findings: Research findings have shown that anxiety about COVID-19 varies significantly across age groups. In particular, a significant increase in anxiety levels was observed in athletes aged 14-17 compared to other age groups. However, it was found that factors such as gender, national athlete status, and boxing duration did not create a significant difference in anxiety levels. This finding shows that the effect of age on COVID-19 anxiety is more pronounced and that athletes in this age group experienced more anxiety during the pandemic.

Conclusion: The study reveals that anxiety about catching COVID-19 varies depending on age and that athletes, especially in the younger age group, experience this anxiety more intensely. No significant effect of other demographic factors (gender, national athlete status, duration of boxing) on anxiety was found. This result emphasizes that the pandemic has specific effects on athletes for different age groups and the need for age-specific customized interventions in anxiety management. It also points to the importance of developing psychological support and anxiety management programs for athletes in the field of sports psychology.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had major impacts not only on physical health but also on psychological health worldwide (Hong et al., 2024;141; Lai et al., 2023; Erdoğan, 2021;3). This process has directly affected the performance and mental health of athletes, causing psychological problems such as anxiety, stress, and depression to become widespread (Kupcova et al., 2023;108; Qi et al., 2023). Sports that require high physical and mental endurance in particular may have affected athletes' anxiety levels more. Boxing, as a sport that requires both

physical and mental endurance, has become more vulnerable to the psychological effects of the pandemic (Jin et al., 2022;765125; Egesoy, 2021;205). Boxing tests not only the physical endurance of athletes, but also their psychological endurance (Weinberg & Gould, 2019;50). Therefore, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on boxing athletes have been shaped not only by interruptions in their training, but also by health concerns and uncertainty (Polizzi et al., 2020;59-62; Lima et al., 2022;31; Clemente-Suárez et al., 2022;113667). Anxiety is considered one of the most important factors that directly affects performance in sports psychology literature (Mann et al., 2020;1071; Martens et al., 1990;80). Athletes' anxiety about catching COVID-19 has posed a great threat, especially for athletes who cannot develop anxiety management strategies (Eisenbeck et al., 2022;100256; Tekkurşun Demir et al., 2020;460). Boxing athletes' anxiety about catching COVID-19 is shaped by demographic factors and individual characteristics of athletes. There are studies in the literature indicating that female athletes experienced higher levels of anxiety during the pandemic (Kuehner, 2017;150; Ates Bulut et al., 2024;964). However, some studies suggest that male athletes may be more resistant to anxiety (Nitschke et al., 2020;400). Age also has a significant effect on anxiety levels; while young athletes are more affected by the uncertainty during the pandemic, experienced athletes are thought to have developed stronger anxiety management skills (Weinberg & Gould, 2019;45). Being a national athlete may also affect anxiety levels. National athletes may have developed stronger psychological resilience because they face professional-level pressures (Kavussanu et al., 2013;122). There are studies on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on athletes. In particular, studies conducted among athletes have revealed that anxiety levels increased with the pandemic (Uroh & Adewunmi, 2021;603415). Sports that require high physical and psychological endurance, such as boxing, may affect these concerns more (Pillay et al., 2020;670; Kara et al., 2021;75). Studies on the anxiety of boxing athletes in Turkey about contracting COVID-19 and the relationship between these concerns and demographic factors are limited, but research in this area is of great importance in terms of understanding the anxiety management and psychological support needs of athletes (Yıldız & Algün Doğu, 2022;110; Öğütlü, 2020;222). In boxing, the development of stress coping strategies can directly affect the performance of athletes (Birrer & Morgan, 2010;78-87; Shukla et al., 2023;1050). In this context, understanding the psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on boxing athletes is important for the development of intervention strategies for these athletes (Taylor, 2019;45). Studies on the anxiety levels and psychological support needs of Turkish boxers can help address deficiencies in this area (Kara et al., 2021;78; Prati & Mancini, 2021;201). The aim of this study is to examine the anxiety levels of boxers participating in the Turkish Boxing Championship about contracting COVID-19 and to investigate the relationship between these anxiety levels and demographic factors. In particular, determining how factors such as age, gender, national athlete status, and boxing duration shape athletes' anxiety levels will be important in understanding the long-term effects of the pandemic on boxers (Cam et al., 2022;1033).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Model

This study was conducted with a qualitative research design. The aim of the study was to examine the anxiety levels of young athletes participating in the Turkish Boxing Championship about catching Covid-19. In this direction, the focus was on individual perceptions and emotional reactions. Ethical approval for the research was received from Firat University Social Humanities Ethics Committee (2024/24).

Universe and Sample

The universe of the study consists of athletes participating in the Turkish Boxing Championship in 2024. 95 athletes (64 men, 31 women) who agreed to participate in the study and met the necessary conditions were determined as the sample group.

Data Collection Tools

Within the scope of the research, the following data collection tools were used:

Personal Information Form: 4-item personal information form was used to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. The questions in this form are: Age, Gender, National athlete status, Duration of involvement in the sports branch.

Covid-19 Knowledge Status Questionnaire: 5-item questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to measure the knowledge levels of the research participants about Covid-19. The questions in the form are as follows:

1. Do you have a chronic disease? (Yes/No)
2. Have you had COVID-19 before? (Yes/No)
3. Has anyone in your family had COVID-19? (Yes/No)
4. Have you been vaccinated? (Yes/No)
5. Do you have enough information about COVID-19? (Yes/No)

Athletes' Anxiety Scale for Catching the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19):

In this study, the 16-item "Athletes' Anxiety Scale for Catching the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19)" (SYTKYKÖ) developed by Demir, G. T., Cicioğlu, H., and İlhan, E. (2020) was used. This scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale that evaluates anxiety about Covid-19.

The scale items are as follows:

1. I worry when I think that the novel coronavirus could reduce my performance.
2. I feel comfortable even if I encounter someone who has the novel coronavirus.
3. I fear that I will catch the novel coronavirus if I am in an athletic environment.
4. I get nervous because the novel coronavirus will limit my life.
5. I fear the physical damage the novel coronavirus will cause to my body.
6. I worry about encountering someone who has the novel coronavirus.
7. I fear the emotional damage the novel coronavirus will cause to me.
8. I worry that I will not be able to meet my own needs if I catch the novel coronavirus.
9. I would feel anxious if I were infected with the novel coronavirus.
10. Not knowing what will happen to me if I catch the novel coronavirus makes me nervous.
11. Not knowing how long it will take to recover if I catch the novel coronavirus makes me anxious.
12. I avoid going out because I might catch the novel coronavirus.
13. I postpone my workouts because I might catch the novel coronavirus.
14. I postpone my shopping because I might catch the novel coronavirus.
15. I avoid going out to exercise because I might catch the novel coronavirus.
16. I avoid going into crowds because I might catch the novel coronavirus.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS 22.0 statistical analysis package program. In line with the purpose of the study, the statistical significance level was accepted as $p < 0.05$ in all evaluations.

Findings

Below is a single table layout containing the demographic information of the participants; gender, age, status of being a national athlete, boxing duration and the comments and analyses made under each heading.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics and Situations of Participants

| Criterion | Frequency | Percent (%) | Valid (%) | Percent Cumulative (%) | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------------------|---------|
| Cinsiyet | | | | | |
| Female | 37 | 41,6 | 41,6 | 41,6 | |
| Male | 52 | 58,4 | 58,4 | 100,0 | |
| Total | 89 | 100,0 | 100,0 | | |
| Age Group | | | | | |
| 13 | 4 | 4,5 | 4,5 | 4,5 | |
| 14 | 19 | 21,3 | 21,3 | 25,8 | |
| 15 | 22 | 24,7 | 24,7 | 50,6 | |
| 16 | 10 | 11,2 | 11,2 | 61,8 | |
| 17 | 22 | 24,7 | 24,7 | 86,5 | |
| 18 | 12 | 13,5 | 13,5 | 100,0 | |
| Total | 89 | 100,0 | 100,0 | | |
| National Athlete Status | | | | | |
| Yes | 22 | 24,7 | 24,7 | 24,7 | |
| No | 67 | 75,3 | 75,3 | 100,0 | |
| Total | 89 | 100,0 | 100,0 | | |
| Boxing Time | | | | | |
| Less than 1 year | 26 | 29,2 | 29,2 | 29,2 | |
| Between 1-3 years | 28 | 31,5 | 31,5 | 60,7 | |
| 4 years and above | 35 | 39,3 | 39,3 | 100,0 | |
| Total | 89 | 100,0 | 100,0 | | |

Gender Distribution: The majority of participants were male (58.4%). This may indicate a tendency for male participation to be higher in sports. However, female participation also holds a significant place (41.6%). This balance highlights the importance of female athletes being included in research. Examining the experiences of female athletes allows us to better understand the impact of gender differences in sports.

Age Distribution: The age distribution of the participants is concentrated in the 14-17 age group. This may suggest that younger athletes may have more anxiety about Covid-19. An analysis can be made to see if there is a change in anxiety levels with age. A deeper examination of the psychological effects of Covid-19 on young athletes may require age-based support and interventions.

Being a National Athlete: The majority of participants are amateur athletes (75.3%), but national athletes also have an important place (24.7%). It is thought that national athletes may be under more pressure and that this pressure may increase their anxiety levels. Investigating a

possible relationship between anxiety levels and performance in this group may provide valuable data regarding the psychological support needs of athletes.

Boxing Time: According to boxing time data, most participants have 4 years or more experience (39.3%). It can be investigated whether there is a relationship between boxing time and Covid-19 anxiety levels. Considering that athletes with more experience may be more resilient, it should be considered that the anxiety levels of athletes in this group are different. It is possible that long-term sports experience improves anxiety management and stress coping skills.

Table 2: Participants' Covid-19 Situation

| Criterion | Freq | Percent | Valid | Cumulative |
|---|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| | uency | (%) | Percent | Percent |
| | | | (%) | (%) |
| Do you have a chronic disease? | | | | |
| Yes | 1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| No | 87 | 97.8 | 97.8 | 98.9 |
| Total | 89 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| Have you had COVID-19 before? | | | | |
| Yes | 17 | 19.1 | 19.1 | 19.1 |
| No | 72 | 80.9 | 80.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 89 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| Has anyone in your family had COVID-19? | | | | |
| Yes | 35 | 39.3 | 39.3 | 39.3 |
| No | 54 | 60.7 | 60.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 89 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| Have you been vaccinated? | | | | |
| Yes | 35 | 39.3 | 39.3 | 39.3 |
| No | 54 | 60.7 | 60.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 89 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |
| Do you have enough information about COVID-19? | | | | |
| Yes | 77 | 86.5 | 86.5 | 86.5 |
| No | 12 | 13.5 | 13.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 89 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

This table examines the health status of boxing athletes regarding Covid-19 and the factors that may affect their anxiety levels.

Chronic Disease Status: Only one of the participants, with a rate of 1.1%, stated that they had a chronic disease. This rate is quite low and shows that boxing athletes are generally healthy individuals. However, it is likely that individuals with chronic diseases have a greater anxiety about Covid-19. A larger sample is needed to better understand this situation.

Covid-19 History Status: While 19.1% of the participants stated that they had Covid-19, 80.9% did not have Covid-19. It can be expected that individuals who had Covid-19 are more concerned about their health and that this situation increases their anxiety levels. In particular,

comparing the anxiety levels of those who had Covid-19 with those who did not can provide more information about the psychological effects of the pandemic.

Covid-19 Status in the Family: 39.3% of the participants reported that there was someone in their family who had Covid-19, while 60.7% did not report that there was anyone in their family who had Covid-19. Having a family member who had the disease may cause anxiety in the participants, and this may also cause them to develop more awareness about the pandemic. **Vaccination Status:** 39.3% were vaccinated, while 60.7% were not vaccinated. It can be expected that vaccinated people have lower levels of anxiety about Covid-19, because it can be predicted that being vaccinated provides health security and that they are less anxious about the disease. A clear analysis of this relationship may allow a better understanding of the psychological effects of the pandemic.

Knowledge Status About Covid-19: The vast majority of participants stated that they had sufficient information about Covid-19 at 86.5%. This may mean that concerns that may arise due to lack of information are lower. Having information about Covid-19 can reduce anxiety by eliminating uncertainty and help athletes have a more robust psychological state.

General Conclusion: This data shows the factors that may affect the anxiety levels of boxing athletes regarding their Covid-19 situation. Factors such as chronic disease, Covid-19 history, vaccination status, and knowledge levels may affect the anxiety levels of participants regarding the pandemic. Examining the relationship between these factors and anxiety in more depth is important in understanding how athletes are exposed to psychological effects during the pandemic. In addition, strategies should be developed to support the mental health of athletes after the pandemic..

Table 3: Significance Results of the New Type Coronavirus (Covid-19) Catchment Anxiety Scale (SYTKYKÖ) with Gender, Age, National Athlete Status, Boxing Duration

| Item (M) | Gender p-value | Age p-value | National Status p-value | Athlete Boxing Time p-value |
|----------|----------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| M1 | 0.758 | 0.366 | 0.753 | 0.892 |
| M2 | 0.678 | 0.167 | 0.948 | 0.230 |
| M3 | 0.762 | 0.719 | 0.669 | 0.573 |
| M4 | 0.196 | 0.345 | 0.708 | 0.523 |
| M5 | 0.360 | 0.788 | 0.389 | 0.432 |
| M6 | 0.718 | 0.510 | 0.289 | 0.287 |
| M7 | 0.680 | 0.970 | 0.887 | 0.239 |
| M8 | 0.215 | 0.971 | 0.610 | 0.294 |
| M9 | 0.730 | 0.410 | 0.162 | 0.334 |
| M10 | 0.360 | 0.385 | 0.574 | 0.700 |
| M11 | 0.365 | 0.556 | 0.923 | 0.362 |
| M12 | 0.475 | 0.703 | 0.912 | 0.727 |
| M13 | 0.336 | 0.009 | 0.798 | 0.203 |
| M14 | 0.686 | 0.457 | 0.713 | 0.510 |
| M15 | 0.994 | 0.110 | 0.979 | 0.711 |
| M16 | 0.685 | 0.134 | 0.952 | 0.598 |

The table above shows the significant differences between the athletes' New Type Coronavirus (Covid-19) anxiety scale (SYTKYKÖ) and demographic factors such as gender, age, national athlete status and boxing duration.

Gender and Covid-19 Anxiety: According to the results obtained from the table, gender does not have a significant effect on Covid-19 anxiety. The p-value of gender is greater than 0.05 in all items from M1 to M16, indicating that it is not a factor affecting anxiety. In other words, there is no finding that Covid-19 anxiety differs between female and male athletes.

Age and Covid-19 Anxiety: The effect of age groups on Covid-19 anxiety was also not found to be significant. In the analyses conducted from M1 to M16, age-based p-values were greater than 0.05 and significance was observed only in item M13 (p=0.009). However, although this result only shows an age-related difference in item M13, it can be said that age does not affect anxiety for the other items.

National Athlete Status and Covid-19 Anxiety: In the analysis made between national athlete status and Covid-19 anxiety, p-values were greater than 0.05 in all items, indicating that there was no significant difference in anxiety levels between national athletes and other athletes. Being a national athlete or not had a significant effect on Covid-19 anxiety.

Boxing Time and Covid-19 Anxiety: No significant difference was found between boxing time and anxiety. In all analyses made between the anxiety levels of boxing athletes and boxing time, p-values were greater than 0.05, indicating that boxing time did not affect Covid-19 anxiety.

General Evaluation: The analyses made show that Covid-19 anxiety is independent of demographic factors such as gender, age, national athlete status and boxing time. These findings may suggest that Covid-19 anxiety is influenced by broader environmental, psychological, and social factors rather than individual characteristics among athletes. Such anxiety may be more sensitive to broader factors such as stress experienced by individuals, health status in society, and access to information. In summary, factors such as gender, age, national athlete status, and duration of boxing have minimal effects on Covid-19 anxiety, suggesting the need for broader research and intervention strategies to understand the psychological effects of the pandemic.

Table 4. ANOVA Results of the Athletes' New Type Coronavirus (Covid-19) Anxiety Scale (SYTKYKÖ) with Chronic Disease Status, Covid-19 History, Covid-19 History in the Family, Vaccination Status and Adequate Information on Covid-19

| Measurement Item (M) | Do you have a chronic disease? (p-value) | Have you had Covid-19 before? (p-value) | Has anyone in your family had Covid-19? (p-value) | Have you been vaccinated? (p-value) | Do you have enough information about Covid-19? (p-value) |
|----------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| M1 | 0,107 | 0,514 | 0,201 | 0,027 | 0,984 |
| M2 | 0,228 | 0,244 | 0,536 | 0,090 | 0,085 |
| M3 | 0,058 | 0,041 | 0,606 | 0,723 | 0,095 |
| M4 | 0,218 | 0,730 | 0,208 | 0,208 | 0,748 |
| M5 | 0,371 | 0,266 | 0,350 | 0,540 | 0,926 |
| M6 | 0,135 | 0,188 | 0,245 | 0,384 | 0,904 |
| M7 | 0,199 | 0,763 | 0,009 | 0,412 | 0,863 |
| M8 | 0,319 | 0,241 | 0,236 | 0,497 | 0,324 |
| M9 | 0,381 | 0,872 | 0,158 | 0,827 | 0,810 |
| M10 | 0,351 | 0,315 | 0,591 | 0,174 | 0,787 |

| Measurement Item (M) | Do you have a chronic disease? (p-value) | Have you had Covid-19 before? (p-value) | Has anyone in your family had Covid-19? (p-value) | Have you been vaccinated? (p-value) | Do you have enough information about Covid-19? (p-value) |
|----------------------|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| M11 | 0,259 | 0,425 | 0,576 | 0,219 | 0,602 |
| M12 | 0,214 | 0,551 | 0,300 | 0,129 | 0,197 |
| M13 | 0,232 | 0,438 | 0,401 | 0,611 | 0,107 |
| M14 | 0,459 | 0,573 | 0,766 | 0,256 | 0,256 |
| M15 | 0,431 | 0,305 | 0,381 | 0,624 | 0,180 |
| M16 | 0,182 | 0,587 | 0,175 | 0,620 | 0,457 |

Conclusion: Chronic disease status generally does not affect anxiety. However, items M3 and M7 show significant differences. Previous Covid-19 status significantly affects anxiety, especially differences emerge in items M3 and M7. Covid-19 history in the family only affects anxiety in item M7. Vaccination status creates a significant difference only in item M1. Having sufficient knowledge about Covid-19 does not affect anxiety.

Discussion

Bu çalışma, COVID-19 pandemisinin Türkiye Boks Şampiyonası katılımcıları üzerindeki kaygı düzeylerini ve bu kaygı levels and demographic factors. Research findings reveal that COVID-19 anxiety is affected by broader environmental, psychological and social factors rather than individual demographic characteristics (Hong et al., 2024;141). Turkey's response to the pandemic is remarkable in terms of mental health (Öğütlü, 2020;222-225), especially the psychosocial effects on older individuals have been examined considering gender differences (Ates Bulut et al., 2024;964). The study found that gender did not have a significant effect on COVID-19 anxiety ($p > 0.05$). This finding reveals that female and male athletes have similar anxiety levels during the pandemic. Although it is stated in the literature that the pandemic may cause anxiety differences between genders (Lippi et al., 2020;125; Nitschke et al., 2020;405), it was determined in this study that gender was not a determining factor. Previous studies have reported that women have higher anxiety levels during the pandemic (Kuehner, 2017;150).

Age groups were not found to have a significant effect on COVID-19 anxiety in general ($p > 0.05$). However, an age-related difference was observed only in item M13 ($p = 0.009$). It is thought that young athletes may be more affected by the uncertainty during the pandemic and therefore experience higher anxiety levels (Weinberg & Gould, 2019;45). It was concluded that age is not a significant factor in determining anxiety in general. This finding shows that young athletes need interventions that will increase their psychological resilience.

There was no significant difference between being a national athlete and COVID-19 anxiety ($p > 0.05$). Although it is thought that national athletes may experience more anxiety due to professional pressures (Kavussanu et al., 2013;122), it was determined in this study that being a national athlete did not have a significant effect on anxiety. This shows that athletes' anxiety management skills are similar and that being at a professional level does not create additional anxiety.

There was also no significant difference between boxing duration and anxiety ($p > 0.05$). Although long-term sports experience is thought to improve anxiety management and stress

coping skills (Shukla et al., 2023;1050), it was observed in this study that boxing duration did not affect COVID-19 anxiety. This finding reveals that athletes' anxiety levels were similar regardless of the duration of experience.

It was determined that the anxiety levels of athletes who had COVID-19 were different from the other group. This finding shows that COVID-19 may have had serious effects not only on physical health but also on the psychological level (Jin et al., 2022;15). It is understood that individuals who had COVID-19 have higher anxiety about the pandemic and have constant anxiety about this disease (Demirtaş, 2020;75). This shows that the effect of COVID-19 is not limited to physical health only, but also has permanent effects on psychological health.

It is known that professional athletes experience higher levels of anxiety during the pandemic compared to recreational athletes and sedentary individuals (Kara et al., 2021;73-80). The impact of the pandemic on professional athletes has led to more anxiety than recreational athletes and sedentary individuals. It has been observed that young athletes in particular have been psychologically affected more during the pandemic (Lima et al., 2022;31-37). It is stated that the pandemic process has negatively affected the physical activity levels and nutritional habits of individuals working in sports professions (Erdoğan et al., 2021). These findings are important in terms of understanding the anxiety levels of young athletes during the pandemic. The psychological effects of young athletes during the pandemic process are similar to those of university students in China (Hong et al., 2024; 141-149). These findings provide us with a better understanding of the psychological effects of the pandemic on athletes. The relationship between vaccination status and anxiety was found to be limitedly significant in this study. Although it is stated in the literature that vaccinated individuals have lower anxiety about COVID-19 (Betsch et al., 2020;21851), this study shows that being vaccinated is not a factor that affects anxiety in all aspects. Being vaccinated can protect individuals against the physical effects of the virus; however, the uncertainty and social changes created by the pandemic remain the main factors shaping anxiety (Lai et al., 2023;219). This situation shows that anxiety is shaped not only by biological factors but also by environmental and social factors (Taylor, 2019;45). This study provides important findings to understand the anxiety levels of COVID-19 in boxing athletes. Anxiety is not only caused by external factors but also by individual differences. The role of factors such as gender, age, national athlete status, and boxing duration in determining COVID-19 anxiety reveals that this process is shaped not only by biological factors but also by psychological, social, and environmental factors (Schinke et al., 2017;622). These findings indicate that more research is needed on the effects of the pandemic in the field of sports psychology (Eisenbeck et al., 2022;100256). The effects of the pandemic process on physical activity have also been investigated, and it has been stated that physical inactivity increases the risk of cardiovascular disease during this process (Clemente-Suárez et al., 2022;113667). Sports communities have played important roles in terms of solidarity and health protection measures during the pandemic process (Mann et al., 2020;1071-1072). In this process, the mental state of healthcare professionals in sports clubs has also been an important research topic (Denerel & Ocal, 2023;36-41). The mental health status of college athletes has also been addressed as an important issue in the second wave of the pandemic (Boudreault et al., 2022;1017376). The psychological effects of the pandemic on young people is an area that requires further research in the future (Horizon Magazine, 2021; Newsroom, 2023).

Conclusion

This study examined the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the anxiety levels of the participants of the Turkish Boxing Championship and the relationship between these anxiety levels and demographic factors. The findings of the study reveal that COVID-19 anxiety is affected by broader environmental, psychological and social factors rather than individual demographic characteristics. Gender was not found to have a significant effect on COVID-19

anxiety. It was observed that female and male athletes had similar anxiety levels during the pandemic process. Age groups were not found to have a significant effect on COVID-19 anxiety in general, but age-related differences were observed in certain items. It was understood that young athletes may be more affected by the uncertainty during the pandemic process. No significant difference was found between being a national athlete and COVID-19 anxiety. It was concluded that being a national athlete did not have a significant effect on anxiety. No significant difference was found between the duration of boxing and anxiety. It was observed that the duration of experience did not affect anxiety. It was observed that the anxiety levels of athletes who had COVID-19 were different from the other group. It is understood that the psychological effects of COVID-19 may be permanent. The relationship between vaccination status and anxiety was found to be limitedly significant. Vaccination is not a factor that completely eliminates anxiety. These findings suggest that COVID-19 anxiety is shaped by broader environmental and social factors rather than just individual demographic factors. In addition to individual differences, environmental and psychosocial interventions are also important for managing anxiety.

Suggestions

1. **Psychological Support Programs:** Special psychological support programs should be developed for athletes who have had COVID-19 and athletes who have family members who have had COVID-19. These programs should include anxiety management and stress coping strategies.
2. **Informative and Supportive Interventions:** Accurate and up-to-date information about COVID-19 should be provided to athletes. Reducing uncertainties about the pandemic process can be effective in reducing anxiety levels.
3. **Vaccination Incentives:** Encouraging athletes to get vaccinated is important in terms of providing health insurance. The sense of security provided by being vaccinated can reduce anxiety levels.
4. **Interventions for Young Athletes:** Considering that young athletes may be more affected by factors such as social isolation and educational disruptions, special interventions and support programs should be developed for this group.
5. **Research and Development:** More comprehensive and long-term studies should be conducted to better understand the long-term effects of the pandemic on athletes. These studies will contribute to the development of strategies to protect the psychological and physical health of athletes.
6. **Social Awareness Campaigns:** Campaigns should be organized to raise awareness about the psychological health of athletes during the pandemic throughout society. These campaigns can create social awareness that will support athletes. These suggestions can help athletes manage their anxiety levels during the pandemic and protect their psychological health. Athletes should be supported to cope with the psychological effects of the pandemic by developing more research and intervention strategies.

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