

Comparison of acute effects of fast tempo and slow tempo music on pre-competition anxiety level among university rugby players

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Anxiety is a common psychological trait that depresses optimal sports performance in any sport. It is an important factor similar to stamina or physical capacity. Hence it is important in decision making and reaction to any situation in a competitive stage of an event. It has been shown that listening to music during the pre-competition stage has positive effects on the player's performance, and downregulating unpleasant emotions; anger, confusion, depression, fatigue and tension. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of slow tempo and fast tempo music in down regulating pre-competition anxiety levels of athletes.

Twenty university level male rugby players volunteered to take part in this study. Mean (SD) characteristics of participants were as follows: age 22.9 (1.8) years; height 1.65 (0.05) m; body mass 83.8 (8.7) kg; playing experience 2.4 (1.4) years. The subjects were assigned to two groups - group A and group B randomly. A pre-test was conducted before the warm up session to assess the baseline anxiety level of the players of both groups. Fast tempo western music (120-130 beats per minute) and slow tempo western music (50-60 beats per minute) were used for a duration of 15 minutes during their warm up session as treatment for group A and group B respectively. The players were instructed to listen to a particular type of music while they were doing warm up exercises. A post-test was conducted to assess the pre-competition anxiety levels. Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2) was used in pre-test and post-test to assess the anxiety level.

Results of the study revealed the pre-test mean values as 31.7 and 31.6 for group A and group B respectively. Post-test mean values were 27.7 and 30.4 for group A and group B has lower values than their baseline values respectively. The anxiety level in the players of group A significantly decreased ($P < 0.05 = 0.034$) compared to that of the players of group B with 95% confidence interval. Within the confines of this study, it can be concluded that listening to fast tempo music in the pre-competition stage has a positive impact on downregulating the pre-competition anxiety level.