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## Effects of TikTok on the Mental Health of Men's and Women's Soccer Teams at One Institution

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## ***Effects of TikTok on the Mental Health of Men's and Women's Soccer Teams at One Institution***

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### **OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of the social media platform, TikTok, on the mental health of Division III Men's and Women's soccer players at one institution.

### **DESIGN AND SETTING**

Descriptive survey. Independent variables: athletes' mental health by gender, nationality, and academic year. Dependent variable: effects of TikTok on athletes' mental health. Paper copy surveys distributed by hand.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

54(N=54) surveys distributed: return rate 93%(n=50). 60%(n=30) male and 40%(n=20) female. 78%(n=39) from USA, 10%(n=5) Sweden, 4%(n=2) Switzerland, 6%(n=3) England, and 2%(n=1) Canada. 32%(n=16) freshman, 14%(n=7) sophomores, 20%(n=10) juniors, and 34%(n=17) seniors.

### **INTERVENTION**

20 question survey instrument. Face validity and content validity established. IRB approval was obtained. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentage, Chi Square Test (grouping variable: gender), Kruskal Wallis Tests (grouping variables: nationality and academic year) used. Alpha level was  $p=0.05$  *a priori*.

### **MAIN OUTCOME MEASUREMENT**

Likert scale survey.

### **RESULTS**

44%(n=22) strongly agreed/agreed TikTok negatively affects mental health. 48%(n=24) strongly agreed/agreed there is a correlation between low self-esteem and TikTok use.

50%(n=10) females reported using TikTok 3-5 hours daily (mostly before going to bed) opposed to 7%(n=2) males ( $\chi^2=10.417, df=4, p=.034$ ). 45%(n=9) females chose "Strongly Agree"/"Agree" to comparing themselves to others on TikTok, as opposed to 13%(n=4) males ( $\chi^2=23.248, df=4, p<.001$ ). 63%(n=19) males chose "Strongly Disagree"/"Disagree" to frequently feeling anxious compared to 20% (n=4) females ( $\chi^2=14.043, df=4, p=.007$ ). 31%(n=12) of American players "Strongly Agree"/"Agree" to comparing themselves to others while using TikTok, as opposed to 20%(n=1) of Swedish players and 0%(n=0) of players from Switzerland, England, and Canada ( $H=12.487, df=4, p=.014$ ). 100%(n=11) of international players chose "Strongly Agree"/"Agree" to feeling happy with the way they look, compared to 74%(n=29) of American players ( $H=9.829, df=4, p=.043$ ). 49%(n=10) of American players and 50%(n=1) players from Switzerland chose "Strongly Agree"/"Agree" to frequently feeling anxious, compared to 20%(n=1) of Swedish players from and 0%(n=0) of players from England and Canada ( $H=10.245, df=4, p=.036$ ). 0%(n=0) international players chose "Strongly Agree"/"Agree" to frequently struggling with mental health as opposed to 28%(n=11) of American players ( $H=9.894, df=4, p=.042$ ). 63%(n=10) of freshman and 53%(n=9) of seniors chose "Strongly Disagree"/"Disagree" to frequently feeling anxious, while 29%(n=2) of sophomores and 20%(n=2) of juniors chose "Strongly Disagree"/"Disagree" (H=8.607, df=3, p=.035). 69%(n=11) of freshman and 65%(n=11) of seniors chose "Strongly Disagree"/"Disagree" to frequently struggling with mental health as opposed to

29%(n=2) of sophomores and 20%(n=2) of juniors choosing “Strongly Disagree”/“Disagree” ( $H=8.687, df=3, p=.034$ ).

**CONCLUSION**

TikTok had several adverse effects on the mental health of most participants. TikTok use increases self-comparison and affects how student-athletes in this study think and feel

about themselves. With the ever-growing increase in mental health issues in society, it is extremely important for athletic trainers to understand the increased risk of mental health issues as a result of using social media platforms like TikTok.

**KEY WORDS:** *Mental health, Student-Athlete, Anxiety, Body Dissatisfaction, TikTok*