

Does adolescents like modern sports experiences? A trivial question for a major public health stake

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Background:

Improving adolescents' levels of sport and physical activity 'PA' is an official public health issue. However, national and European studies showed decline in overall levels of PA of European adolescents. In France, a school-based study showed a decrease in sport participation among adolescents of Marseille and area. Despite of this decline, we do not know whether they have a positive appreciation of modern sports experiences promoted in clubs. In this study, we aimed to measure French adolescents' athletes retrospective reports of pleasure in these experiences.

Methods:

A previous data collection among a representative sample of adolescents' students was used (n = 1132). Adolescents were separated into 4 subgroups based on sex (Boys/Girls) and socioeconomic status 'SES' (Low/High). The Sport Experiences Questionnaire was used to measure retrospective reports of pleasure in competition, progress and risk-taking experiences. Multivariate linear regressions were performed to show differences between sex, SES and setting of participation (competition/no-competition). Densities diagrams were also presented.

Results:

Among girls and boys, the setting of participation was significantly positively linked to reported pleasure. This effect was greater for competition experiences, respectively 1.45-fold and 1.53-fold increase for competition than no-competition players, for boys and girls. Among girls, high-SES girls presented a lower appreciation of competition experiences than their counterparts with low-SES. This relationship was observed in non-competitive (B = -0.62, p-value = 0.016) and competitive (B = -0.70, p-value = 0.025) settings. Finally, progress experiences were appreciated by all.

Conclusions:

These results may help to step back traditional instituted sports offer. They would help to develop sports initiatives adapted to adolescents' tastes. Finally, progress experiences may be gold experiences in sport and should be promoted in all context of participation.

Key messages:

- Modern sport experiences are not appreciated by all subgroups of adolescents. Endeavors to improve sport participation of adolescents should adapt contents to adolescents' tastes.
- Pleasure in competition and risk-taking are linked to setting of participation and adolescents' SES. The progress experiences may be the gold standard of sports experiences.