

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/gender-differences-in-sleep/>

The study aimed to investigate gender differences in sleep and mental health among competitive athletes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers focused on the potential impact of resilient personality traits, termed cognitive fitness, on these differences. They collected data through questionnaires from athletes, primarily in Melbourne during lockdowns in May 2020, measuring mental health symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress, alongside sleep patterns.

Findings indicated that women athletes reported significantly higher levels of mental health issues compared to men, particularly under chronic stress. However, no notable gender differences were found in sleep quality after controlling for cognitive fitness. Women also exhibited lower self-control and higher intolerance of uncertainty. Cognitive fitness was linked to better mental health outcomes but not directly to sleep.

The study emphasized the importance of supporting women athletes during stressful periods and suggested that training cognitive traits like self-control could be beneficial. It highlighted a need for more comprehensive research into sleep, circadian rhythms, and their relationship to mental health, especially concerning female athletes, who are often at greater risk of mental health issues compared to their male counterparts.

Looking forward, the researchers suggested monitoring sleep and circadian health as vital indicators of mental wellness as women's sports evolve towards professional status. The study underscored the need for investment and research in women's sports to ensure the mental well-being of female athletes.