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Sensation seeking in Slovenian female and male mountain climbers

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Abstract

Our paper focuses on differences in sensation seeking between male and female athletes who engage in high risk sports. There are several studies (Cox, 1994; Tušak & Tušak, 2001; Erjavec, 2002), which indicate that male and female athletes are more similar than males and females in the general population, female athletes thus show more "traditionally male" characteristics. These studies mainly focus on personality, anxiety and aggression; we wanted to address these issues in the area of sensation seeking. Sensation seeking has been well researched in the area of high risk sports – males seem to have higher sensation seeking needs, but gender differences in high risk sports have been quite poorly investigated. Of 33 mountain climbers who participated in our research, 15 of them were male and 18 female and differences in age were not significant. We used Zuckerman's Sensation seeking scale IV, which examines sensation seeking in terms of 5 factors – a general factor, factors of adventure and risk taking, an experience seeking factor, a disinhibition factor and a boredom susceptibility factor. There were no differences found between male and female mountain climbers, except for a tendency toward statistical significance in the factor of disinhibition, which is consistent with some previous research. We conclude that male and female mountain climbers in Slovenia are equal in sensation seeking needs and can be treated as a homogenous sample.

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