

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Mental Health of Sports Fans

John Tabakwot Ayuba

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Eric Osamudiamwen Aigbogun (Jr)

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Victor Archibong

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Ibe Michael Usman (✉ gopama13@gmail.com)

Kampala International University - Western Campus <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6624-1286>

Keneth Iceland Kasozi

Kabale University

Fred Ssempijja

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Adam Moyosore Afodun

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Ifie Josiah

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Swase Dominic Terkimbi

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Robinson Ssebuufu

Kampala International University, Teaching Hospital

Ann Monima Lemuel

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Adesanya Olamide Adewale

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Joshua Ojodale Aruwa

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Odoma Saidi

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Sunday Naguledaticha Chama

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Theophilus Pius

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Suzann Edoho Henry

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Comfort Onongha

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Kevin Matama

Kampala International University - Western Campus

Susan Christina Welburn

University of Edinburgh

Research

Keywords: Age, Sex, Marital status, Anger, Anxiety, Sports fans, COVID-19 mental health, Sports-associated mental health, Africa

Posted Date: December 10th, 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-123622/v1>

License:  This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

[Read Full License](#)

1 **Running title**

2 **Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the mental**
3 **health of sports fans**

4 **Author list**

5 John Tabakwot Ayuba^{1*}, Eric Osamudiamwen Aigbogun, Jr.¹, Victor Archibong¹, Ibe Michael
6 Usman^{1*}, Keneth Iceland Kasozi^{2,3*}, Fred Ssempijja¹, Adam Moyosore Afodun¹, Ifie Josiah¹,
7 Swase Dominic Terkimbi¹, Robinson Ssebuufu⁴, Ann Monima Lemuel¹, Adesanya Olamide
8 Adewale¹, Joshua Ojodale Aruwa¹, Odoma Saidi⁵, Sunday Naguledaticha Chama⁴, Theophilus
9 Pius⁶, Suzann Edoho Henry⁷, Comfort Onongha⁷, Kevin Matama⁵, and Susan Christina
10 Welburn^{2,8*}

11

12 **Author affiliations**

- 13 1. Faculty of Biomedicals Sciences, Kampala International University Western Campus,
14 Bushenyi, Uganda
15 2. Infection Medicine, Deanery of Biomedical Sciences, College of Medicine and Veterinary
16 Medicine, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
17 3. School of Medicine, Kabale University, Box 317 Kabale, Uganda
18 4. Faculty of Clinical Medicine and Dentistry, Kampala International University Teaching
19 Hospital, Bushenyi, Uganda
20 5. School of Pharmacy, Kampala International University Western Campus, Kampala,
21 Uganda
22 6. Department of Medical Laboratory Science, Kampala International University, Uganda
23 7. School of Nursing, Kampala International University Teaching Hospital, Bushenyi,
24 Uganda
25 8. Zhejiang University-University of Edinburgh Institute, Zhejiang University School of
26 Medicine, International Campus, Zhejiang University, Haining, China

27 ***Corresponding Authors:**

28 John Tabakwot Ayuba email: jtblade13@gmail.com
29 Ibe Michael Usman email: gopama13@gmail.com
30 Kenneth Iceland Kasozi email: kicelandy@gmail.com
31 Susan Christina Welburn email: sue.welburn@ed.ac.uk

32

33 **Abstract**

34 **Background:** Information regarding COVID-19 mental health burden among medical workers
35 and other vulnerable individuals has been hugely emphasized during the stressful campaign against
36 COVID-19, however, the mental health problems among sports fans and athletes of Africa and
37 globally have been neglected. The present studies investigated mental health burden and
38 knowledge of sport associated with mental health issues among sports fans.

39 **Methods:** A cross-sectional descriptive study was undertaken amongst sports fans above the age
40 of 18. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents (N=196). Data was
41 collected using google form for indications of anxiety and anger using a modified generalized
42 anxiety disorder (GAD-7) and Spielberger's State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-
43 2) as appropriate.

44 **Results:** Few sports fans (47.4%) knew COVID-19 mental health care. Sports fans who had
45 knowledge about mental health issues associated with sports had low levels of anxiety ($R = 0.010$;
46 $P = 0.894$) and anger ($R = -0.025$; $P = 0.724$) with increasing age. However, anxiety and anger
47 increase with age among female sports fans but reduce in males. Sports fans with partners have
48 high levels of anxiety and anger during lower age levels (below the 20s) and these decrease with
49 aging and this relationship is inverse in their single counterparts.

50 **Conclusions:** Most sports fans in Uganda are not knowledgeable about COVID-19 sports-
51 associated mental health issues and surprisingly this seems to be associated with less COVID-19
52 sports-related mental health issues during the lockdown.

53 **Keywords:** Age, Sex, Marital status, Anger, Anxiety, Sports fans, COVID-19 mental health,
54 Sports-associated mental health, Africa

55

56 **1.0 BACKGROUND**

57 The Coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic was declared a global health emergency
58 [1], with a great impact on people's livelihood, including the sports industries [2]. Currently, only
59 scanty data exists regarding COVID-19 sports-associated mental health issues among sports fans
60 and athletes of Africa and globally because an emphasis on mental health during the COVID-19
61 campaign has been put on healthcare workers [1, 3, 4], and other vulnerable persons neglecting
62 the sport's stakeholders [5]. The recommended quarantine restrictions and social distancing
63 measure have greatly affected various categories of people in the African continent [6], including
64 sports fans, through impacted athlete's chances to professionally compete, followed by a wide-
65 spread concern on mental health issues among sports fans and athletes [7]. Previous research on
66 psychological effects of pandemic-associated quarantine involving MERS (Middle East
67 Respiratory Syndrome) and SARS (Severe acute respiratory syndrome) correlated obstructive
68 social interaction, suspension of recreational activities with PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder),
69 anger, anxiety, and subtle bipolar behavioral orientation [8, 9]. Recent findings regarding COVID-
70 19 sports-associated mental health burdens among the sports fans and athletes have shown that
71 athletes and sports fans could be predisposed to sports-related mental burdens due to lack of poor

72 social support whenever they indulge in stressful thoughts that can lead to psyche concerns [10],
73 and that focusing on COVID-19 sports-associated mental health and increased awareness of it
74 using sports bodies and health ministries were vital strategies in curbing not only COVID-19
75 mental health challenges in general but specifically COVID-19 sports-associated mental health
76 burdens as well in the face of the pandemic [11].

77 With the outbreak of COVID 19, the Ugandan government took some unprecedented measures,
78 which included travel restriction, suspension of public and social gathering, and sporting activities
79 [2, 6, 12]. The restriction of people from going to stadiums and viewing centers to watch their
80 favorite team play, due to the need for social distance would be associated with psychological
81 effects amongst sports [13]. The catastrophic effects associated with the sudden cancellation of
82 most sporting events initiated a crisis that left sports enthusiasts, coaches, and athletes with
83 personal emotional burdens, with some complaining of symptoms consistent with depression and
84 anxiety-related mindset during the lockdown [14]. The ongoing partial international sports bans
85 weigh heavily on the minds of sports fans, subscribers, and supporter clubs largely due to financial
86 constraints affecting the sport's stakeholders including the fans [15]. Several international sporting
87 events including but not only the 2020 Two Oceans Marathon of Cape Town, South Africa, [16],
88 Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games [17], and the UEFA Euro 2020 [18] were canceled or
89 postponed to limit the impact of the COVID-contagion, therefore negatively impacting athletes,
90 fans, brand-sponsors, and other companies.

91 Studies have found a meaningful association between age, knowledge, and mental health, where
92 knowledge, and the associated up-to-date and specifically accurate mental health information,
93 precautionary measures, and maturity (age) were shown to improve positive attitudes toward
94 mental health and reduced the psychological impact of COVID-19-related stress, anxiety, and
95 depression with an improved psychological resilience during the pandemic [19] However, it should
96 be re-emphasized that elderly persons are more predisposed to epidemic-related medical
97 conditions including mental health issues related to epidemics such as COVID-19 and SARS of
98 2003 [19–21]. Previous studies regarding mental health associated with the epidemics have
99 indicated that there are sex differences regarding psychological responses with variable levels of
100 stress, anxiety, and depression among the male and female sports fans [22, 23], the contributing
101 factors for the gender differences of the epidemic sports-related mental health burdens could be
102 biological, social, among others that invariably impact the physiological, cognitive and behavioral
103 responses of the fans [24][25]. The variable role of marital status in sports-related mental health
104 problems has been shown in single individuals and those with partners, where the two groups show
105 different impact levels regarding epidemically-related mental health burdens [26]. While
106 collaborative efforts and global partnerships are required to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and its
107 associated mental health challenges [11], all the stakeholders such as the academicians, media,
108 health professionals, government and non-government organizations are uniquely positioned in
109 their communities and could be used in the battle against COVID-19 mental health challenges,
110 including COVID-19 sports-associated mental health burdens [11].

111 In sports terms, the impact should be tackled from wide perspectives including and not limited to
112 business, sociology, sustainability, psychology, finance, and economics [27], justifying the need for
113 the present study. The present study aimed to evaluate the knowledge of COVID-19 sports-
114 associated mental health issues, COVID-19 sports-associated mental health burdens, and their
115 relation with factors such as age, sex, and marital status among sports fans of Uganda

116 **2.0 METHODS**

117 **2.1 STUDY SITE AND DESIGN**

118 This was a cross-sectional study conducted among 196 sports fans in Bushenyi district of Western
119 Uganda above the age of 18, in August and September 2020.

120 **2.2 SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION**

121 The sample population was small, but not static; thus, the study adopted the sample size necessary
122 for estimating a population proportion of a small, finite population with $(1-\alpha)$ 100% confidence
123 and error no larger than e [28];

$$124 \quad n = \frac{m}{1 + \frac{m-1}{N}}$$

125 Where;

$$126 \quad m = \frac{Z_{1/2\beta}^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

127 m = is the sample size necessary for estimating the proportion p for a small infinite population,
128 and n = correction to represent a finite population.

129 Let $\alpha = 5$, therefore $e = 0.05$

$$130 \quad Z_{1/2\beta} = 1.96$$

131 Where p = the assumed proportion of sports fan in Ishaka town

132 The youth population in Uganda is 78% of the total population [29], which was also
133 assumed to be the proportion of youth (0.78) that makes up Ishaka population of 17,500
134 [30] = 13,475

135 There was no available record for fan base in Uganda, thus, the study assumed that the
136 proportion of sports fan will be at least one-quarter of the proportion of youth = $0.78 / 4 =$
137 0.195

138 Therefore,

139 $p = 0.195$

140
$$m = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.195(1 - 0.195)}{0.05^2}$$

141
$$m = \frac{0.60303516}{0.0025} = 241.214$$

142

143 Correction for small population (n);

144
$$n = \frac{241.214}{1 + \frac{241.214 - 1}{13,475}}$$

145
$$n = \frac{241.214}{1.018} = 237$$

146 The sample Size for nursing students will be 237, and the researcher assumed an attrition rate of
147 10% (24); therefore, the workable sample size will be 261.

148 **2.3 DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT**

149 **2.3.1 Data collection tool**

150 A structured close-ended questionnaire was used for the data collection. The questionnaire
151 captured the sociodemographic features of the respondents modified tools used to measure
152 awareness of mental health care, generalized anxiety, anger, and depression. Awareness of mental
153 health care was assessed using simple questions and each of the options provided were assigned
154 scores. Anxiety was assessed using a modified generalized anxiety disorder (GAD-7) item tool
155 [31]. Each of the responses attracted scores. Anger was assessed using a modified Spielberger's
156 State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2) [32]. Responses for each question were
157 assigned scores (Figure 1).

158 **Figure 1: *Insert here***

159 **2.3.2 Data collection method**

160 The initial draft of the questionnaire was sent to different experts (psychiatrists, sociologists, and
161 statisticians) for face and content validity. The questionnaire was pretested among 10 respondents
162 and remolded to a final tool and was made available online, using google form online resource (via
163 docs.google.com/forms). In the end, 257 responses were retrieved, 41 responses were excluded
164 because greater than 25% of the required pieces of information were missing, and about 10 were
165 minors.

166 **2.3.3 Data management**

167 The data obtained from the survey were entered into Microsoft Excel (2016) and scores, grades
168 were assigned to assessment variables. Since the questionnaire were self-administered. Data
169 collected were assessed for completeness, and response failing to meet the 75% cut-off (on all
170 valid questions) were excluded. No adjustment was made to any categorical variable.

171 The coding for the various sections were provided as follows: Sociodemographic characteristics
172 (Q1-Q5) entered into excel included sex (male/female), marital status
173 (single/married/divorced/separated) recoded to relationship status (married=partner,
174 single/divorced/separated=no-partner). The response variables anxiety (score & level) and anger
175 (score & level) were the mental health state of interest, while knowledge of mental health
176 associated with sports (K-MHCSPORTS) was an intervening variable. Sex and relationship status
177 were the categorical factor and age the continuous factor. Mental Health Care Knowledge was
178 obtained as a binary attribute of YES (1) or NO (0). Modified GAD Assessment of Anxiety (Q11,
179 Q12 & Q14): Numerical values – Multiple response [For each option selected = 1, indifferent =
180 0]., while Q13 was closed-ended [Yes =1, No=0]. Modified STAXI-2 Assessment for Anger (Q15
181 – Q17): Numerical values – Multiple response [For each option selected = 1, indifferent = 0]. The
182 scores of the multiple options for the modified GAD, and STAXI-2 were obtained by assigning
183 one (1) mark per response, and the averages were obtained by summing all scores (qt) and dividing
184 by the weight (n). While BDI had four (4) options graded as 3, 2, 1, and 0 (for indifferent). This
185 provided the score (score), which is then rated (_name of condition; knowledge, anxiety, or anger)
186 using preestablished cut-offs; to determine the level of mental state (No/low, moderate, or severe).
187 This scoring and grading system allows for both linear and uni/multivariate analysis (Figure 1).

188 **2.3.4 Data Analysis**

189 The data was transferred entered into STATGRAPHICS centurion XVI version 16.1.11 (StatPoint
190 Tech., Inc.), which was used to build a relationship model for Knowledge, Anxiety & Anger using
191 Multiple Correspondence Analysis (Burt option). Comparison of Regression Lines analysis was
192 used to observe the relationship between age, awareness, anxiety, and anger stratified using the
193 sociodemographic variables. All analyses were performed at a 95% confidence level and p-values
194 less than 0.05 were taken to be significant. Burt option of the multiple Correspondence Analysis
195 was used to model the relationship between the three (3 key) variables; knowledge, Anxiety, and
196 Anger.

197 **3.0 RESULTS**

198 **Knowledge of COVID-19 mental health associated with sports**

199 Table 1 represents the Burt description of variable interaction, therefore showing how frequently
200 pairs of categories for two variables occur together. Few sports fans (47.4%) knew of COVID-19
201 mental health associated with sports (Table 1).

202 **Table 1: *Insert here***

203 **Dimensions of variability**

204 The scree plot in Figure 2 shows the Eigen analysis of the correlation matrix for the Multiple
205 Correspondence Analysis (MCA) of target variables entered into the models. From the graph, it
206 was observed that only two dimensions (Dims) in the models explain the variance, therefore only
207 Dim 1 and Dim 2 were considered in the analysis (Figure 2). The Inertia and Chi-Square
208 Decomposition table was used to describe how many dimensions are needed to explain most of
209 the differences amongst the categories. A tabular description of primary interest is the Cumulative
210 Percentage column, which shows the percentage of total variability explained by Dim1, Dim1&2, Dim1,
211 2 &3, and so on. In this case, the first 2 dimensions explain 72.45% of the variability (Table 2).

212 **Table 2: *Insert here***

213 **Relationships between variables in Dim 1 and Dim 2**

214 The MCA Map is a 2D-graphically explanation of the correlation of variables in Dim1 & Dim2 and as
215 observed, the various level of mental health (anxiety and anger) correlated in their dimensions; moderate
216 levels of anxiety & anger and high levels of anxiety and anger were clustered within the same area, while
217 no knowledge of MHC was clustered with results low anxiety and anger (Figure 2).

218 **Figure 2: *Insert here***

219 **Relationship between mental health levels, age, and knowledge of mental health in sport**

220 From the correlation result in Table 3, the linear relationship between age & anger was not significant but
221 negative ($r=-0.025$, $P=0.724$), while anxiety was positively but not also significant anger ($r=0.01$, $P=0.894$).
222 However, anxiety & anger were strongly (positively) correlated ($r=0.625$, $P<0.001$). Sports fans who had
223 knowledge about sports-associated mental health issues had low levels of anxiety ($R = 0.010$; $P =$
224 0.894) and anger ($R = -0.025$; $P= 0.724$) with increasing age (Figure 3 & Table 3).

225 **Figure 3: *Insert here***

226 **Table 3: *Insert here***

227 **Relationship between mental health levels, age, and sex**

228 The influence of sex on COVID-19 sport mental health (anxiety and anger) with increasing age do
229 not favor females when compared to males. As age increased, anxiety and anger were reduced in
230 males but increased in females (Figure 4).

231 **Figure 4: *Insert here***

232 **Relationship between mental health levels, age, and relationship statuses**

233 At lower ages (below the 20s) individuals with partners had more levels of mental health burdens
234 (anger and anxiety) than those without partners, but the individuals with partners had sharply

235 decreased anxiety levels with increasing age and the reverse was observed for those without
236 partners (Figure 5)

237 **Figure 5: *Insert here***

238 **4.0 DISCUSSION**

239 This current work focuses specifically on the considerations for COVID-19 sports-associated
240 mental health among sports fans as recommended recently [27]. The majority of sports fans
241 (52.6%) had insufficient knowledge of COVID-19 mental health associated with sports because
242 an emphasis on mental health during the current COVID-19 pandemic has been put on medical
243 workers and other vulnerable population such as the stakeholders of sports are left out. This has
244 contributed to the lack of information on COVID-19 sports mental health to advice policy
245 especially on the African continent [3, 4][5]. Therefore, the general widespread concern on the
246 mental health of fans and athletes remains to be investigated in several communities [7]. The two
247 COVID-19 sports-related mental health challenges of anger and anxiety complement each other
248 within this study population, and this is important since multiple mental health burdens usually
249 appear together in pandemic related psychological effects associated with quarantines as was
250 observed during the MERS and SARS epidemics and now, the COVID-19 pandemic which has
251 been associated with anger, anxiety and subtle bipolar behavioral orientation [8, 9], depression
252 occurring with anxiety, stress, and loss of sleep [5].

253 Our study suggests that a lack of knowledge on COVID-19 sport-associated with less COVID-19
254 sport-related mental health problems of anger and anxiety, in agreement with Henriksen *et al.*, [10]
255 who found that when a sports fan becomes knowledgeable about the challenges and predisposing
256 factors of sports-related mental health, then they get feelings that predispose them to psyche
257 concerns. For example, being an over-weight athlete increases feelings of addictions, anxiety,
258 drug-addictions, and bipolar psyche health concerns [10]. This reasoning largely contradicts with
259 most studies involving COVID-19 sports-related mental health among sports fans that indicate that
260 focusing on sports-related mental health and increased awareness through sports bodies and health
261 ministries were vital strategies in improving general and sports-associated mental health in the
262 face of the pandemic [11], for them a lack of awareness is a predisposing factor to mental health
263 burdens. This line of reasoning seems to be more applicable to our study because although
264 knowledge has been suggested as less important in our fans, those with knowledge tend to have
265 less COVID-19 sport-related anxiety and anger with aging indicating that level of awareness of
266 COVID-19 sports-related mental health is vital in curbing the problem [11]. Further research is
267 needed in this line. The study shows that the most important associations seen in our population
268 that could be effective in improving COVID-19 sport mental health among sports fans in Ugandan
269 are dimensions 1 (high anxiety/high anger), and dimension 2 (low anxiety/low anger/no knowledge
270 of mental health of sports fans) that accounted for 72.45% of the variability amongst the categories.
271 These findings emphasize that lack of awareness of the sport mental health during the pandemic
272 seems to be protecting the fans from the mental challenges and although this finding looks weird
273 but it agrees with previous work of [10], but this explanation does not apply to our study because

274 having knowledge on sports-related mental health did not increase the levels of anger and anxiety
275 in the general population.

276 Furthermore, the study shows that having knowledge of mental health associated with sports is not
277 dispensable because having the knowledge was associated with low levels of anxiety and anger
278 with aging concurring with, that age and knowledge are important variables that come with
279 maturity [19]. A well-informed older individual would prefer to calmly go through a mental
280 situation when challenged than individuals who are getting old but do not understand the
281 psychological negative effects associated with certain issues. There is a meaningful relationship
282 between knowledge, maturity (age) and these improve positive attitudes toward mental health [19].
283 Additionally, specific up-to-date and accurate mental health information and precautionary
284 measures were associated with a lower psychological impact of COVID-19 related stress, anxiety,
285 and depression and improved mental health and psychological resilience during the pandemic [19].
286 This explanation is in disagreement with most findings that suggest that epidemic-related mental
287 health burdens such as those of SARS of 2003 and the current COVID-19 occur more among older
288 adults [20, 21], however those studies included persons aged 65 and over unlike the current study
289 that obtained data on persons of 18-to-50 years, additionally, they did not elicit knowledge levels
290 on mental health among the individuals. Further scientific justification is recommended to show
291 the role of knowledge of mental health associated with sports or lack of knowledge, in improving
292 COVID-19 sport mental health of sports fans.

293
294 The influence of sex on COVID-19 sport mental health (anxiety and anger) with increasing age
295 does not favor females when compared to males. As age increased, anxiety and anger were
296 reduced in males but increased in females. These could be explained by social and biological
297 factors and how these affect the psychological response of the two sexes (sex differences in stress
298 responses as a mechanism underlying gender differences in mental problems) [25]. Our findings
299 concur with Wang et al. who associated the female gender with a greater psychological impact of
300 the outbreak and higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, however, we contradict with
301 Wang et al. in that the present study shows an association between mental health, age, and marital
302 status, unlike in Wang et al.'s study where there was no significant association between mental
303 health, age and marital status [22]. Young male fans tend to be more anxious and angry than
304 females due to the existence of numerous fears such as losing their male-dominated domain and
305 insecurities concerning their adulation of sports stars [23]. In additional, biological factors
306 especially testosterone changes during vicarious experiences of winning and losing among male
307 sports fans play a major role in determining physiological, cognitive and behavioral responses of
308 the fans [24].

309
310 The interaction between relationship status, age, and anxiety levels were important in our study;
311 at lower ages (below the 20s) individuals with partners had more levels of mental health burdens
312 (anger and anxiety) than those without partners, but the individuals with partners had sharply
313 decreased anxiety levels with increasing age and the reverse was observed for those without

314 partners. These findings are in contradiction with a study by Wang et al [22] who found no
315 association between age, marital status, and the psychological impact associated with the COVID-
316 19 outbreak regarding the levels of stress, anxiety, and depression [22]. At lower ages, those with
317 partners are more vulnerable to poor mental health because they are predisposed to stressful events
318 associated with young couples during their transition to parenthood such as intimate partner
319 violence including but not limited to sexual violence, physical violence, threats or emotional abuse,
320 and substance abuse among the young sports fans/couples [33]. However, providing strategies for
321 strengthening social support networks and relationships among young sports fans is an effective
322 way of improving mental health among them [33] and this seems true to the young fans in the
323 present study. The presence of a companion in stressful times has been observed as an effective
324 tool in alleviating sport mental health challenges because a friend/ couple discuss about their
325 problems instead of indulging in risky behavior such as binge drinking, drug abuse that could
326 predispose them to risky behaviors impacting on their mental health [26]. In general terms, single
327 sports fans are more predisposed to risky behavior predisposing them to sports-associated mental
328 health burdens [26] due to their poor social support network and lack of a companionship [26, 33].
329 However, these theories need more exploration and validation in the context of sport mental health
330 before they can be used in policies to curb sports-related mental problems.

331 **CONCLUSIONS**

332 Most sports fans in Uganda are not knowledgeable about COVID-19 mental health care, and
333 surprisingly this seems protective from COVID-19 mental health issues during the lockdown.
334 However, knowledge of mental healthcare is not dispensable because it was associated with low levels
335 of anxiety and anger with aging. The age, sex, and marital status of the sports fans variably
336 influenced mental health state among sports fans during the pandemic, as such should be
337 considered during policy formation aimed at formulating psychological interventions to improve
338 sports-associated mental health and psychological resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

339 **ABBREVIATIONS**

340	COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
341	MERS	Middle East Respiratory syndrome
342	PTSD	Posttraumatic stress disorder
343	SARS	Severe acute respiratory syndrome

344 **DECLARATIONS**

345 **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

346 Expedited ethical approval was acquired from the Institutional Review Board of Kampala
347 International University. Consent to participate was acquired through online acceptance to
348 participate in the study.

349 **Consent for publication**

350 Not applicable

351 **Availability of data and material**

352 Data files used in the study can be accessed on <https://figshare.com/s/9b773c81aa0a3acc875d>

353 **Completing interests**

354 Authors declare no competing interests.

355 **Funding**

356 This work was supported by Zhejiang University Education Foundation Emergency Research
357 Fund (SCW); Global Challenges Research Fund and the University of Edinburgh.

358 **Author contributions**

359 JTA, EOA, IMU conceptualized the study; JTA, EOA, KIK, IMU, VA, SCW designed the study;
360 FS, AMA, IJ, SDT, AML, AOA, JOA, OS, SNC, TP, SHE, CO, KM collected the data; , EOA,
361 KIK, VA, RS, conducted statistical analysis, EOA, VA, IMU, KIK, FS, AMA, IJ, SDT, RS, AML,
362 AOA, JOA, OS, SNC, TP, SHE, CO, KM, SCW conducted data interpretation. JTA, EOA, KIK,
363 IMU drafted the initial manuscript while JTA, EOA, VA, IMU, KIK, FS, AMA, IJ, SDT, RS,
364 AML, AOA, JOA, OS, SNC, TP, SHE, CO, KM, SCW reviewed it for intellectual content. All
365 authors approved the final version for publication and remain in agreement to ensure that questions
366 related to the integrity of any part of the work are resolved.

367 **Acknowledgements**

368 The authors appreciated efforts put in by every team member, to ensure the success of the project

369 **References**

370 1. Li Q, Guan X, Wu P, Wang X, Zhou L, Tong Y, et al. Early Transmission Dynamics in
371 Wuhan, China, of Novel Coronavirus–Infected Pneumonia. *N Engl J Med.* 2020;382:1199–207.
372 doi:10.1056/nejmoa2001316.

373 2. Usman IM, Ssempijja F, Ssebuufu R, Lemuel AM, Archibong VB, Ayikobua ET, et al.
374 Community Drivers Affecting Adherence to WHO Guidelines Against COVID-19 Amongst
375 Rural Ugandan Market Vendors. *Front Public Heal.* 2020;8:340. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2020.00340.

376 3. Kang L, Li Y, Hu S, Chen M, Yang C, Yang BX, et al. The mental health of medical workers
377 in Wuhan, China dealing with the 2019 novel coronavirus. *The Lancet Psychiatry.* 2020;7:e14.
378 doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30047-X.

379 4. Bao Y, Sun Y, Meng S, Shi J, Lu L. 2019-nCoV epidemic: address mental health care to
380 empower society. *The Lancet.* 2020;395:e37–8. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30309-3.

381 5. Rajkumar RP. COVID-19 and mental health: A review of the existing literature. *Asian J*

- 382 Psychiatr. 2020;52:102066. doi:10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102066.
- 383 6. Kasozi KI, MacLeod E, Ssempijja F, Mahero MW, Matama K, Musoke GH, et al.
384 Misconceptions on COVID-19 Risk Among Ugandan Men: Results From a Rapid Exploratory
385 Survey, April 2020. *Front Public Heal.* 2020;8:416. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2020.00416.
- 386 7. Coronavirus (COVID-19) events as they happen.
387 <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen>.
388 Accessed 12 Nov 2020.
- 389 8. Reynolds DL, Garay JR, Deamond SL, Moran MK, Gold W, Styra R. Understanding,
390 compliance and psychological impact of the SARS quarantine experience. *Epidemiol Infect.*
391 2008;136:997–1007. doi:10.1017/S0950268807009156.
- 392 9. Kavanagh AM, Mason KE, Bentley RJ, Studdert DM, McVernon J, Fielding JE, et al. Leave
393 entitlements, time off work and the household financial impacts of quarantine compliance during
394 an H1N1 outbreak. *BMC Infect Dis.* 2012;12:311. doi:10.1186/1471-2334-12-311.
- 395 10. Henriksen K, Schinke R, Moesch K, McCann S, Parham WD, Larsen CH, et al. Consensus
396 statement on improving the mental health of high performance athletes. *International Journal of*
397 *Sport and Exercise Psychology.* 2020;18:553–60. doi:10.1080/1612197X.2019.1570473.
- 398 11. Yang J, Tong J, Meng F, Feng Q, Ma H, Shi C, et al. Characteristics and challenges of
399 psychological first aid in China during the COVID-19 outbreak. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity.*
400 2020;87:113–4. doi:10.1016/j.bbi.2020.04.075.
- 401 12. Echoru I, Kasozi KI, Usman IM, Mutuku IM, Ssebuufu R, Ajambo PD, et al. University
402 Lecturers and Students Could Help in Community Education About SARS-CoV-2 Infection in
403 Uganda. *Heal Serv Insights.* 2020;13:117863292094416. doi:10.1177/1178632920944167.
- 404 13. Tremblay MS, Warburton DER, Janssen I, Paterson DH, Latimer AE, Rhodes RE, et al. New
405 Canadian physical activity guidelines. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition and Metabolism.*
406 2011;36:36–46.
- 407 14. Coronavirus shutdown: sharp rise in players reporting depression symptoms - FIFPRO World
408 Players' Union. [https://www.fifpro.org/en/health/coronavirus-covid-19-page/coronavirus-](https://www.fifpro.org/en/health/coronavirus-covid-19-page/coronavirus-shutdown-sharp-rise-in-players-reporting-depression-symptoms)
409 [shutdown-sharp-rise-in-players-reporting-depression-symptoms](https://www.fifpro.org/en/health/coronavirus-covid-19-page/coronavirus-shutdown-sharp-rise-in-players-reporting-depression-symptoms). Accessed 12 Nov 2020.
- 410 15. Toresdahl BG, Asif IM. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Considerations for the
411 Competitive Athlete. *Sports Health.* 2020;12:221–4. doi:10.1177/1941738120918876.
- 412 16. Swart K, Maralack D. COVID-19 and the cancellation of the 2020 Two Oceans Marathon,
413 Cape Town, South Africa. *Sport Soc.* 2020;23:1736–52. doi:10.1080/17430437.2020.1805900.
- 414 17. Gallego V, Nishiura H, Sah R, Rodriguez-Morales AJ. The COVID-19 outbreak and
415 implications for the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games. *Travel Medicine and Infectious*
416 *Disease.* 2020;34. doi:10.1016/j.tmaid.2020.101604.

- 417 18. D B, K C, C F. The pitch invader-COVID-19 canceled the game: what can science do for us,
418 and what can the pandemic do for science? *International Journal of Sports Physiology and*
419 *Performance*. 2020;15:917–9. doi:10.1123/ijsp.2020-0467.
- 420 19. Milin R, Kutcher S, Lewis SP, Walker S, Wei Y, Ferrill N, et al. Impact of a Mental Health
421 Curriculum on Knowledge and Stigma among High School Students: A Randomized Controlled
422 Trial. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2016;55:383-391.e1.
423 doi:10.1016/j.jaac.2016.02.018.
- 424 20. Vahia I V., Blazer DG, Smith GS, Karp JF, Steffens DC, Forester BP, et al. COVID-19,
425 Mental Health and Aging: A Need for New Knowledge to Bridge Science and Service. *American*
426 *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*. 2020;28:695–7. doi:10.1016/j.jagp.2020.03.007.
- 427 21. Yip PSF, Cheung YT, Chau PH, Law YW. The impact of epidemic outbreak: The case of
428 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and suicide among older adults in Hong Kong. *Crisis*.
429 2010;31:86–92. doi:10.1027/0227-5910/a000015.
- 430 22. Wang C, Pan R, Wan X, Tan Y, Xu L, Ho CS, et al. Immediate psychological responses and
431 associated factors during the initial stage of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic
432 among the general population in China. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2020;17:1729.
433 doi:10.3390/ijerph17051729.
- 434 23. Crawford G, Gosling VK. The Myth of the ‘Puck Bunny.’ *Sociology*. 2004;38:477–93.
435 doi:10.1177/0038038504043214.
- 436 24. Bernhardt PC, Dabbs JM, Fielden JA, Lutter CD. Testosterone changes during vicarious
437 experiences of winning and losing among fans at sporting events. *Physiol Behav*. 1998;65:59–
438 62. doi:10.1016/S0031-9384(98)00147-4.
- 439 25. Stroud LR, Salovey P, Epel ES. Sex differences in stress responses: Social rejection versus
440 achievement stress. *Biol Psychiatry*. 2002;52:318–27. doi:10.1016/S0006-3223(02)01333-1.
- 441 26. Higgins GE, Tewksbury R, Mustaine EE. Sports fan binge drinking: An examination using
442 low self-control and peer association. *Sociol Spectr*. 2007;27:389–404.
443 doi:10.1080/02732170701313472.
- 444 27. Mastromartino B, Ross WJ, Wear H, Naraine ML. Thinking outside the ‘box’: a discussion
445 of sports fans, teams, and the environment in the context of COVID-19. *Sport Soc*.
446 2020;23:1707–23. doi:10.1080/17430437.2020.1804108.
- 447 28. 6.3 - Estimating a Proportion for a Small, Finite Population | STAT 415.
448 <https://online.stat.psu.edu/stat415/lesson/6/6.3>. Accessed 12 Nov 2020.
- 449 29. Uganda | Factsheets | Youthpolicy.org.
450 <https://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/uganda/>. Accessed 12 Nov 2020.
- 451 30. Ishaka (Division, Uganda) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location.
452 https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uganda/western/admin/bushenyi/SC0720__ishaka/. Accessed

453 12 Nov 2020.

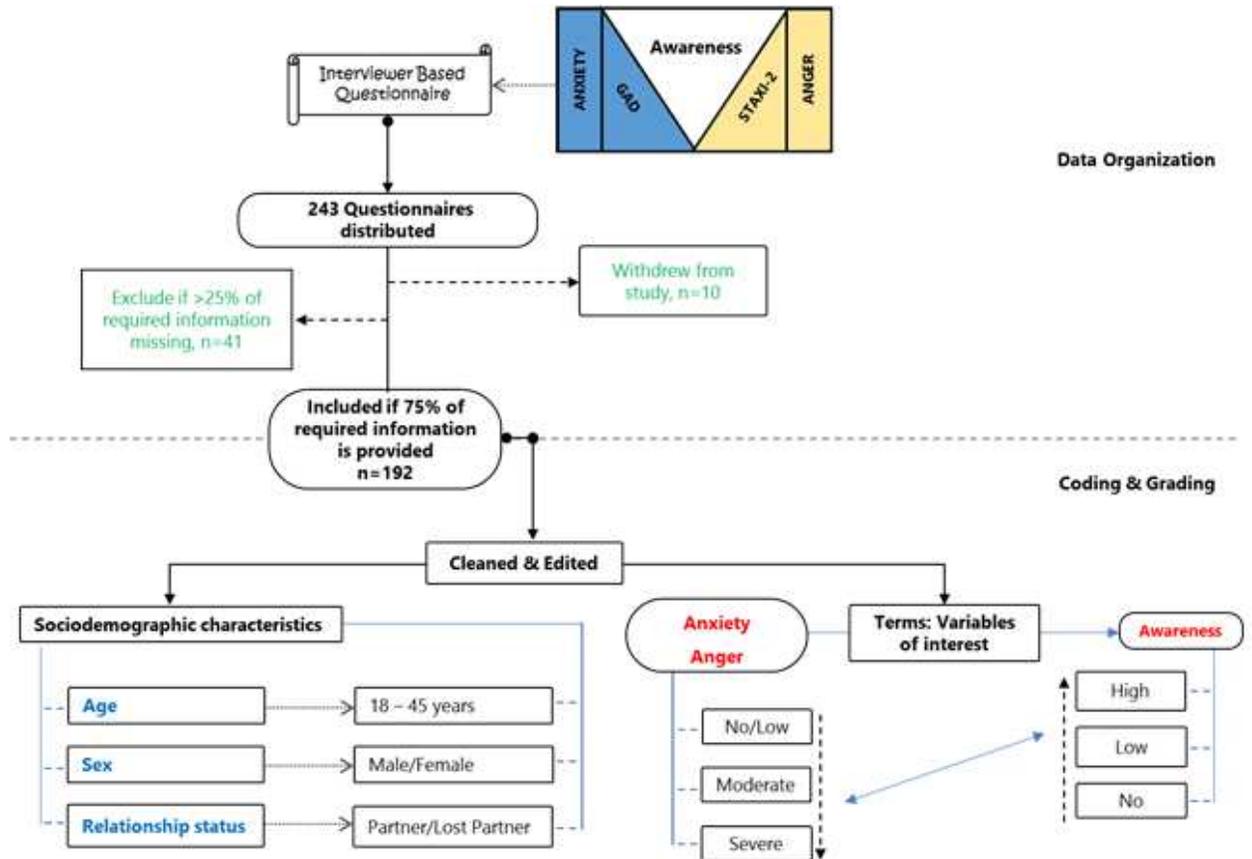
454 31. Bystritsky A, Kerwin L, Feusner JD. A pilot study of Rhodiola rosea (Rhodax®) for
455 generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). J Altern Complement Med. 2008;14:175–80.
456 doi:10.1089/acm.2007.7117.

457 32. State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2) - Statistics Solutions.
458 [https://www.statisticssolutions.com/psychological-personality-state-trait-anger-expression-](https://www.statisticssolutions.com/psychological-personality-state-trait-anger-expression-inventory-2-staxi-2/)
459 [inventory-2-staxi-2/](https://www.statisticssolutions.com/psychological-personality-state-trait-anger-expression-inventory-2-staxi-2/). Accessed 12 Nov 2020.

460 33. Sipsma HL, Callands T, Desrosiers A, Magriples U, Jones K, Albritton T, et al. Exploring
461 Trajectories and Predictors of Depressive Symptoms Among Young Couples During Their
462 Transition to Parenthood. Matern Child Health J. 2016;20:2372–81. doi:10.1007/s10995-016-
463 2064-3.

464

465



466
467 **Figure 1:** Experimental design

468

469

470

471

472 **Table 1:** Burt description of variable interaction (demographically un-categorized)

Variables	K-MHCS		Anxiety level			Anger level		
	No	Yes	High	Moderate	Low/No	High	Moderate	No/Low
K-MHCS.No	103 (52.5)	n/a	7 (3.6)	19 (9.7)	77 (39.3)	5 (2.6)	13 (6.6)	85 (43.4)
K-MHCS.Yes	n/a	93 (47.4)	2 (1.0)	24 (12.2)	67 (34.2)	2 (1.0)	13 (6.6)	78 (39.8)
Anxiety level.High	n/a	n/a	9 (4.6)	n/a	n/a	5 (2.6)	2 (1.0)	2 (1.0)
Anxiety level.Moderate	n/a	n/a	n/a	43 (21.9)	n/a	2 (1.0)	12 (6.1)	29 (14.8)
Anxiety level.Low/No	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	144 (73.5)	0 (0)	12 (6.1)	132 (67.3)
Anger level.High	n/a	n/a	5 (2.6)	2 (1.0)	0 (0)	7 (3.6)	n/a	n/a
Anger level.Moderate	n/a	n/a	2 (1.0)	12 (6.1)	12 (6.1)	n/a	26 (13.3)	n/a
Anger level.No/Low	n/a	n/a	2 (1.0)	29 (14.8)	132 (67.3)	n/a	n/a	163 (83.2)

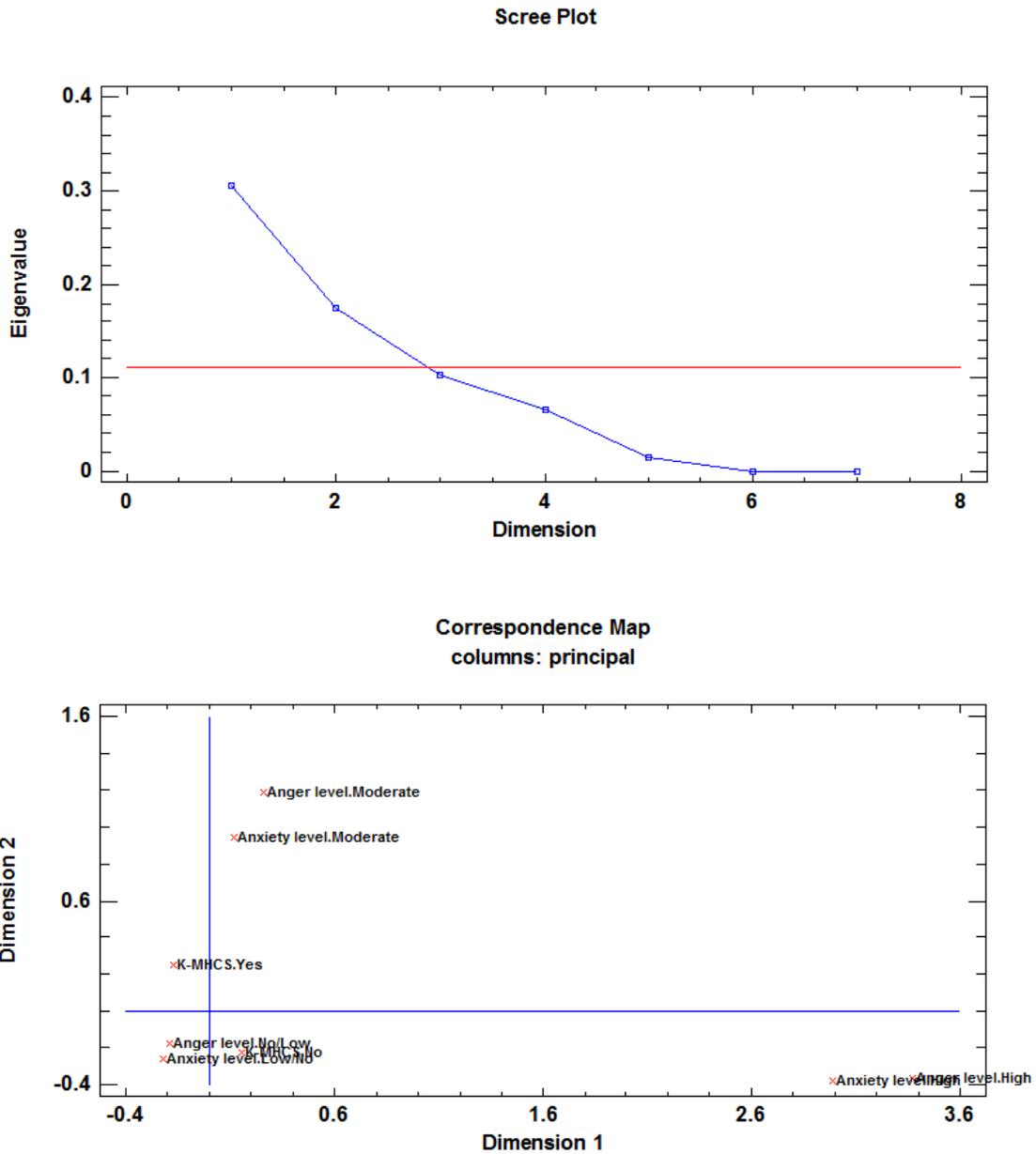
473 **Note:** Interactions between strata of similar variables are represented by n/a (not applicable) [interaction outcome of interest in
 474 bold blue]. **K-MHCS** = knowledge of mental health during COVID-19 associated with sports.

475

476 **Table 2:** Inertia and Chi-Square Decomposition

Dimensions	Singular value	Inertia	Chi-Square	%	Cum %	Histogram
1	0.5535	0.3064	540.40	46.21	46.21	*****
2	0.4171	0.1739	306.83	26.24	72.45	*****
3	0.3204	0.1026	181.04	15.48	87.93	*****
4	0.2564	0.0658	116.01	9.92	97.85	***
5	0.1193	0.0142	25.11	2.15	100.00	*
TOTAL		0.6629	1169.39			

477 **Note:** %, percentage; Cum %, Cumulative percentage [bold blue are limits to Dim analysis].



478
479

480 **Figure 2:** Scree plot of relevance and Multiple Correspondence Analysis Map.
481 Dimensions 1 and 2 are the most important in our study, and **there is strong inverse correlation between**
482 **levels of mental health and knowledge.**

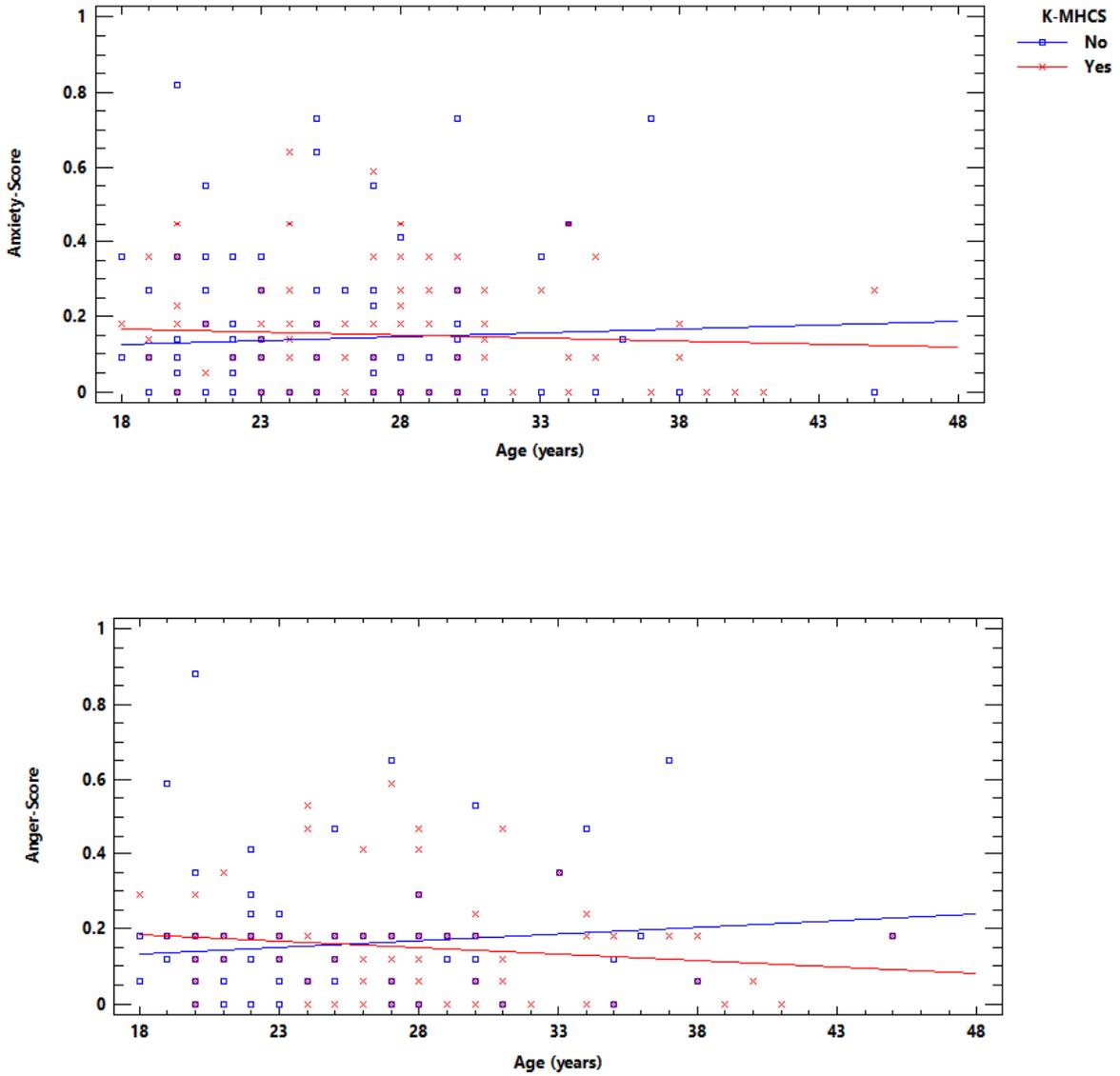
483

484 **Table 3:** Spearman Rho correlation of age, anxiety, and anger

Correlations	Age	Anxiety
Anxiety	0.010	

P-value	0.894	
Anger	-0.025	0.625
P-value	0.724	<0.001

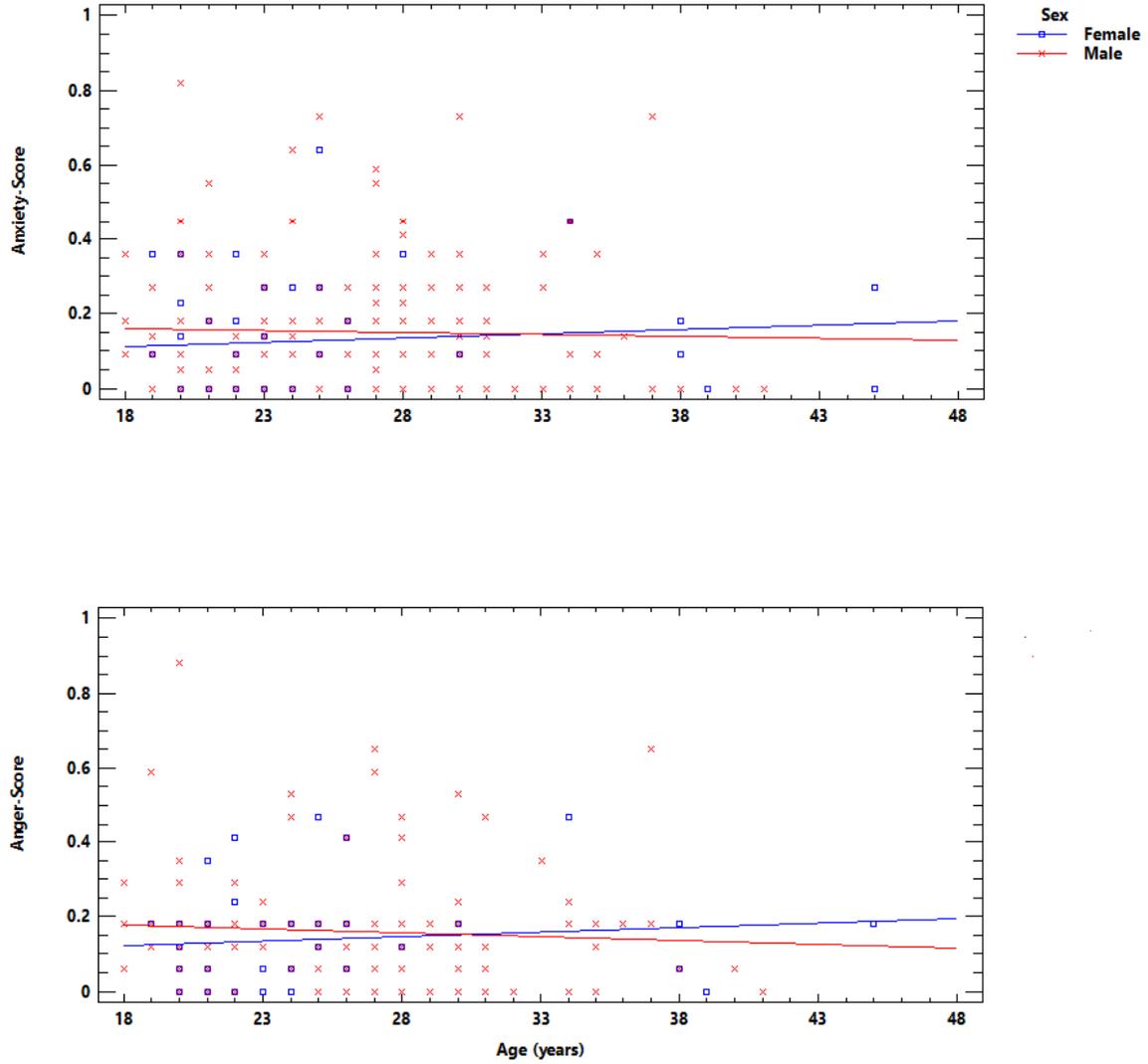
485



486

487 **Figure 3:** Scatter plot of anger and age, and comparison of regression lines of knowledge of MHC. With
 488 aging having knowledge led to low levels of anxiety and anger. K-MHCS= knowledge of mental health
 489 during COVID-19 associated with sports.

490

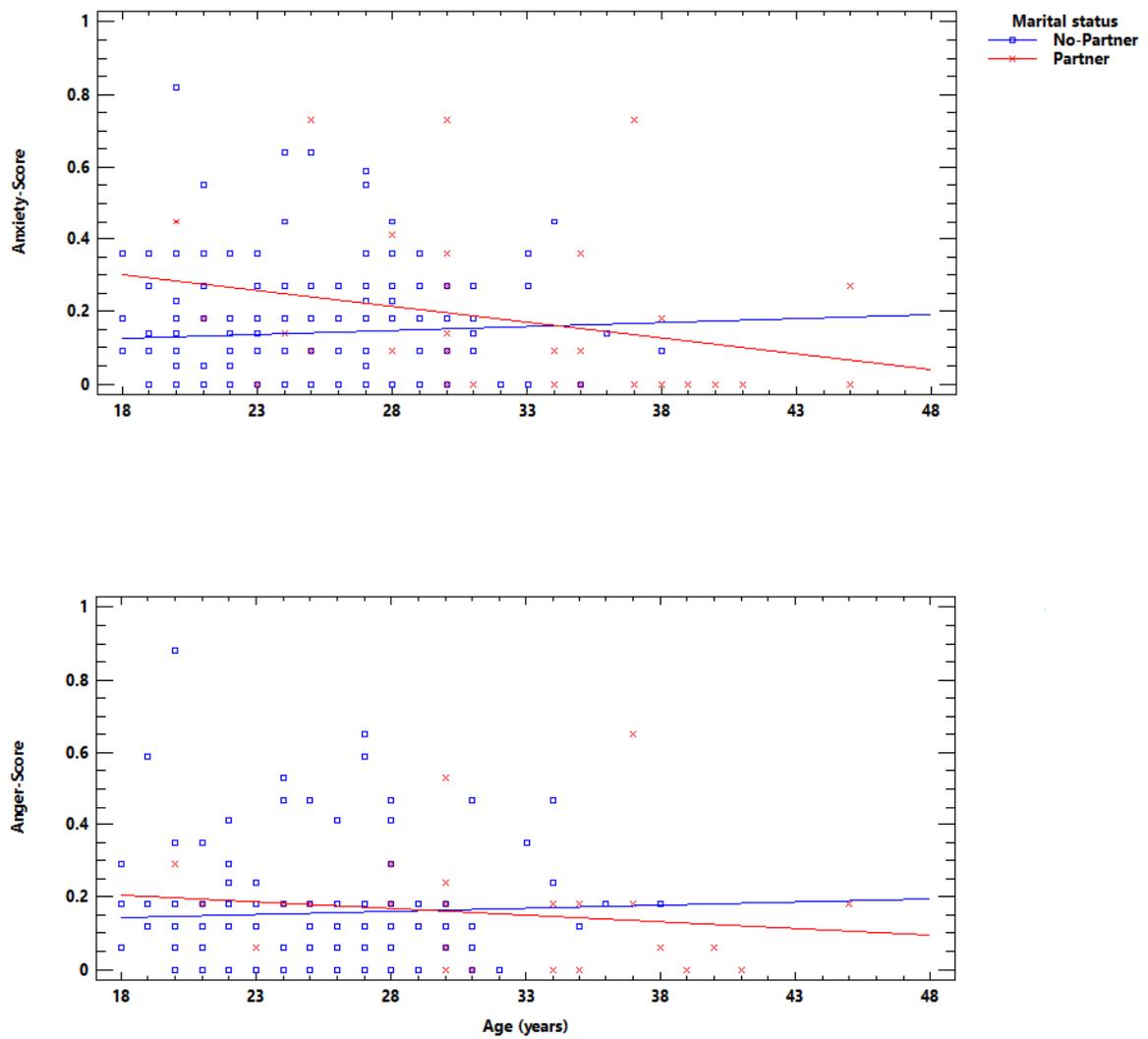


491

492 **Figure 4:** Scatter plot of anger and age, and comparison of regression lines of sex. With increasing age
 493 females had more mental burden levels than males.

494

495



496

497 **Figure 5:** Scatter plot of anger and age, and comparison of regression lines of marital status.

498

Figures

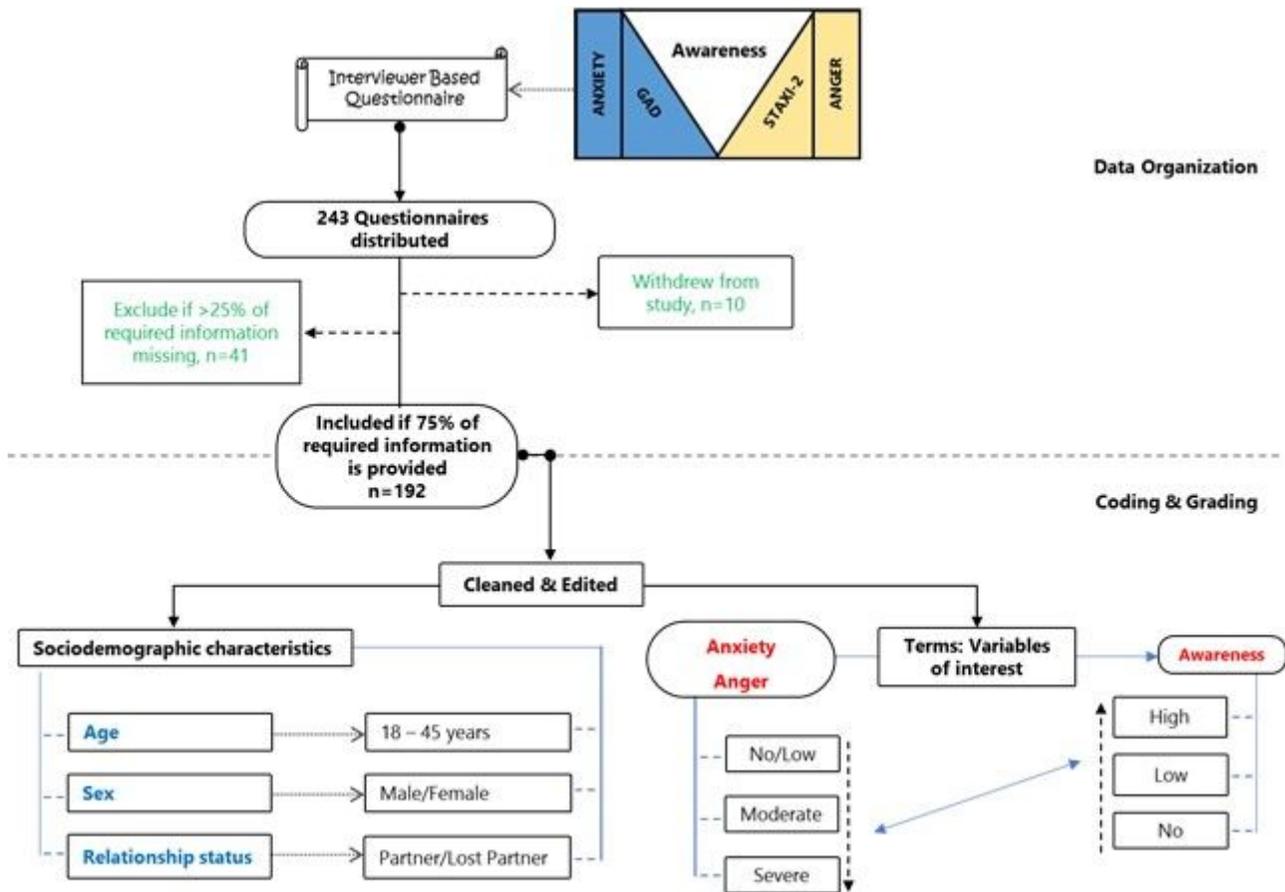


Figure 1

Experimental design

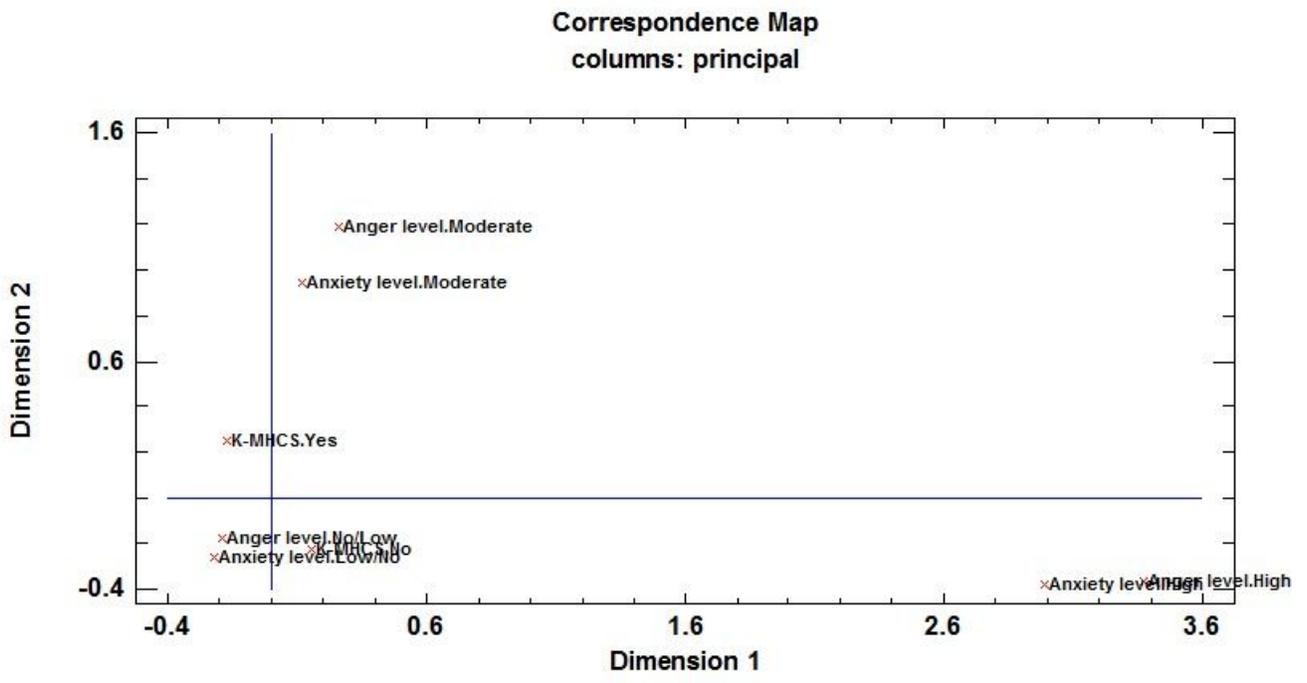
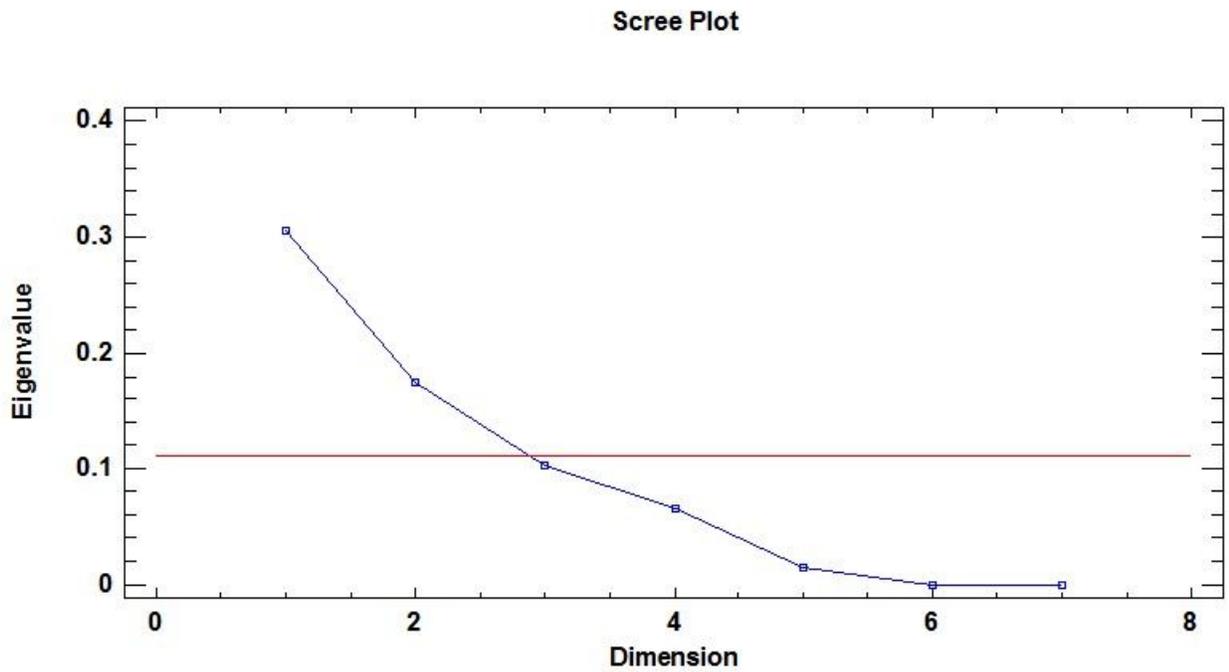


Figure 2

Scree plot of relevance and Multiple Correspondence Analysis Map. Dimensions 1 and 2 are the most important in our study, and there is strong inverse correlation between levels of mental health and knowledge.

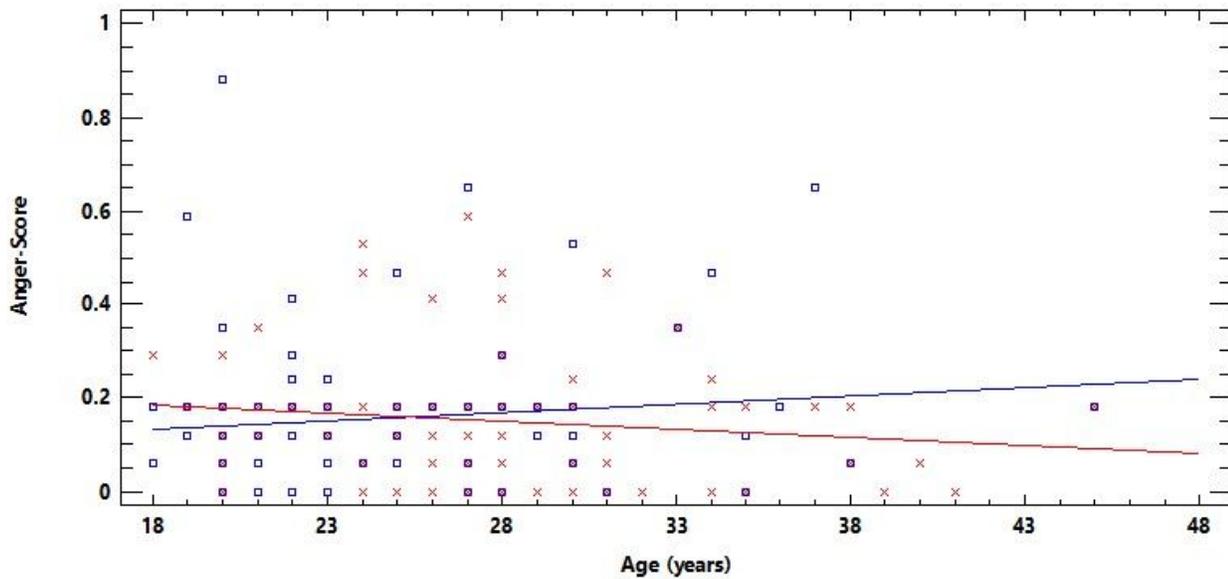
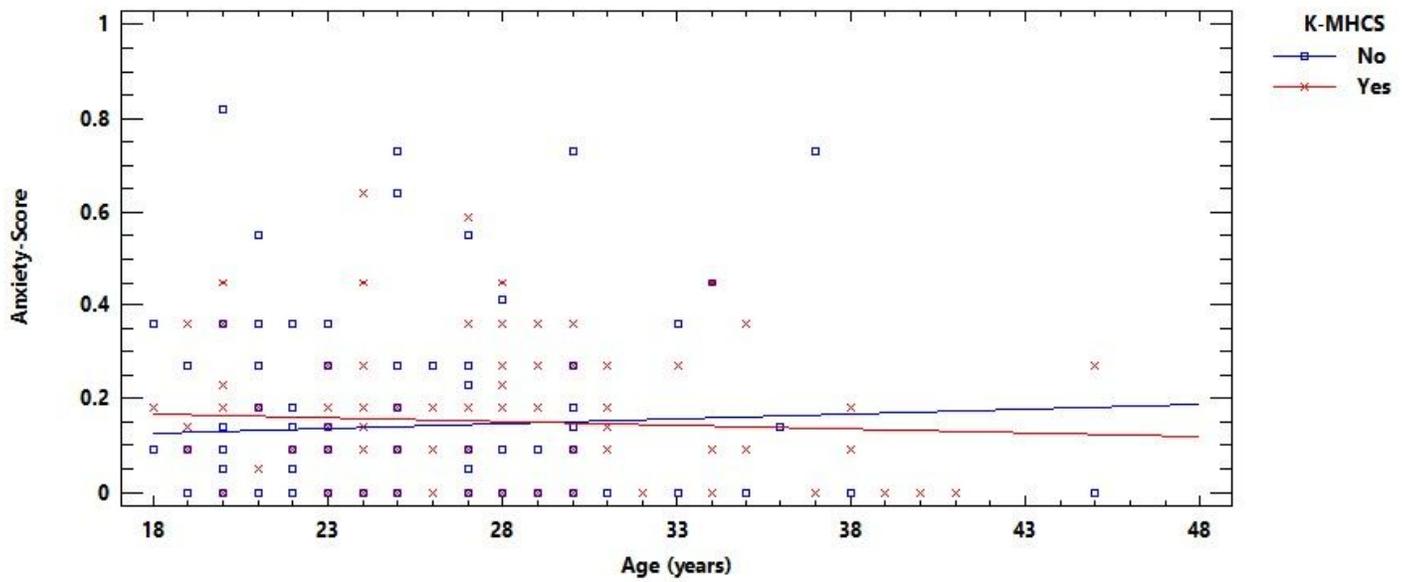


Figure 3

Scatter plot of anger and age, and comparison of regression lines of knowledge of MHC. With aging having knowledge led to low levels of anxiety and anger. K-MHCS = knowledge of mental health during COVID-19 associated with sports.

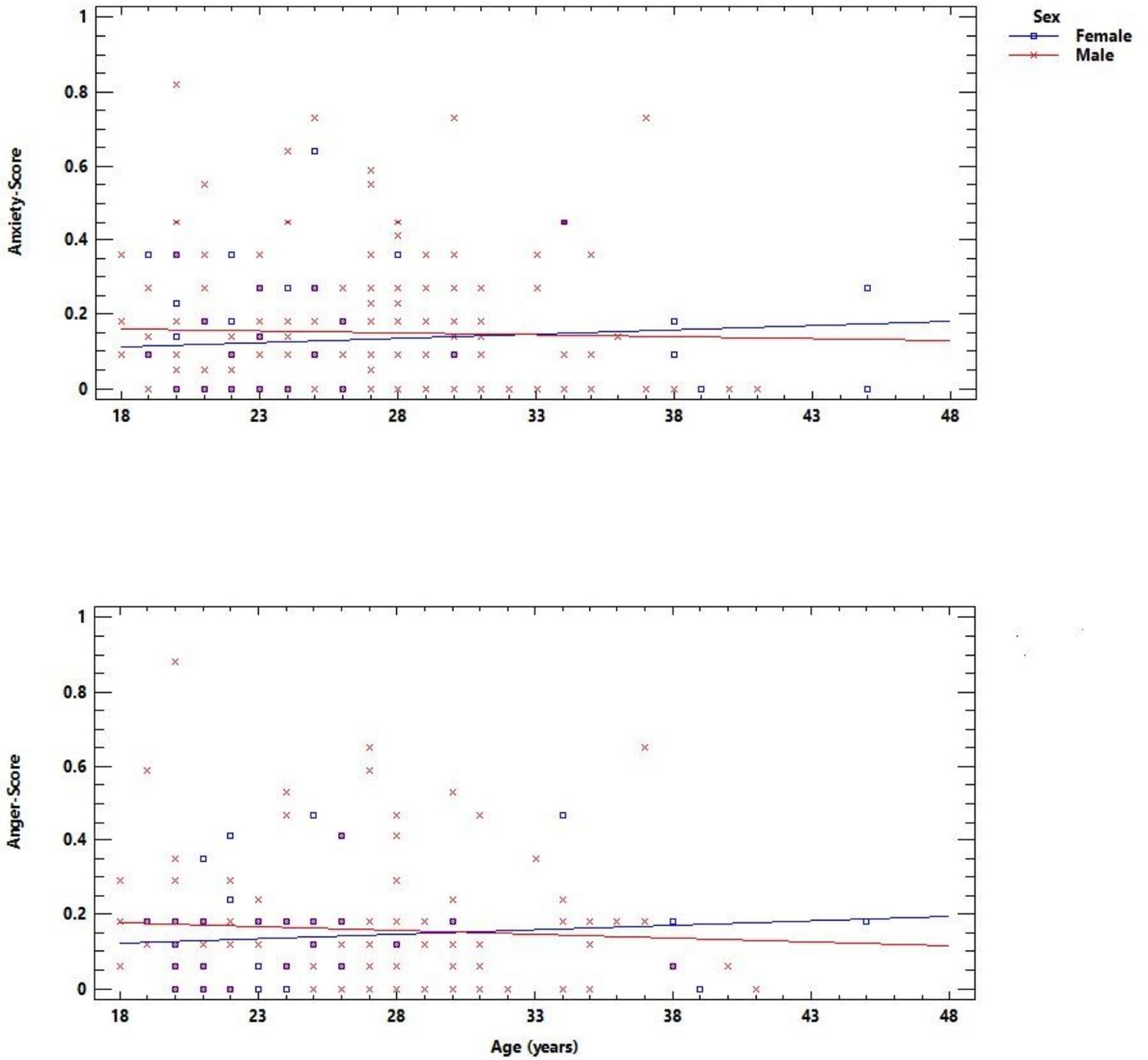


Figure 4

Scatter plot of anger and age, and comparison of regression lines of sex. With increasing age females had more mental burden levels than males.

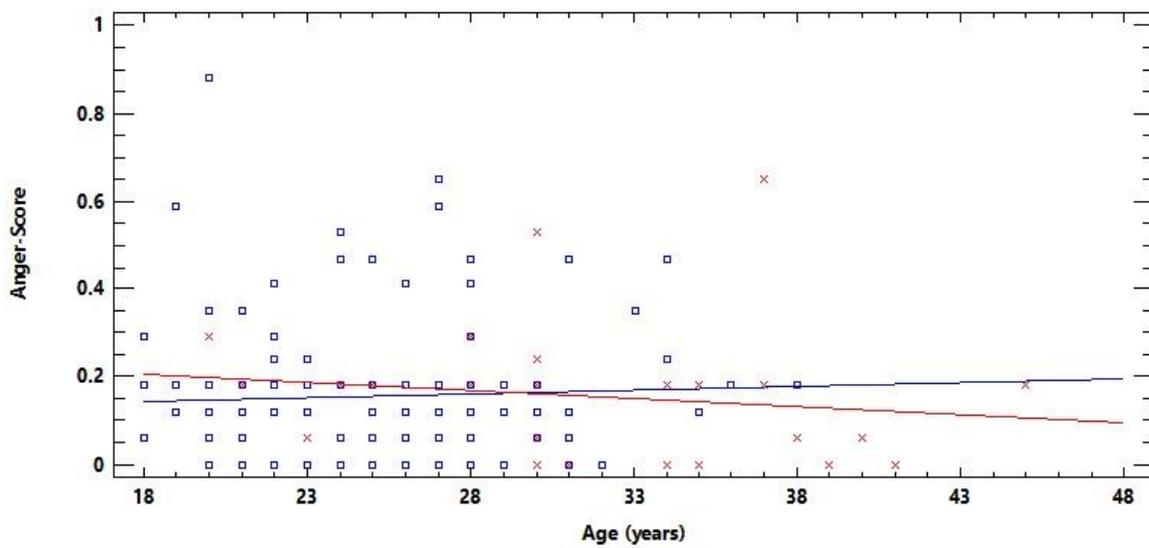
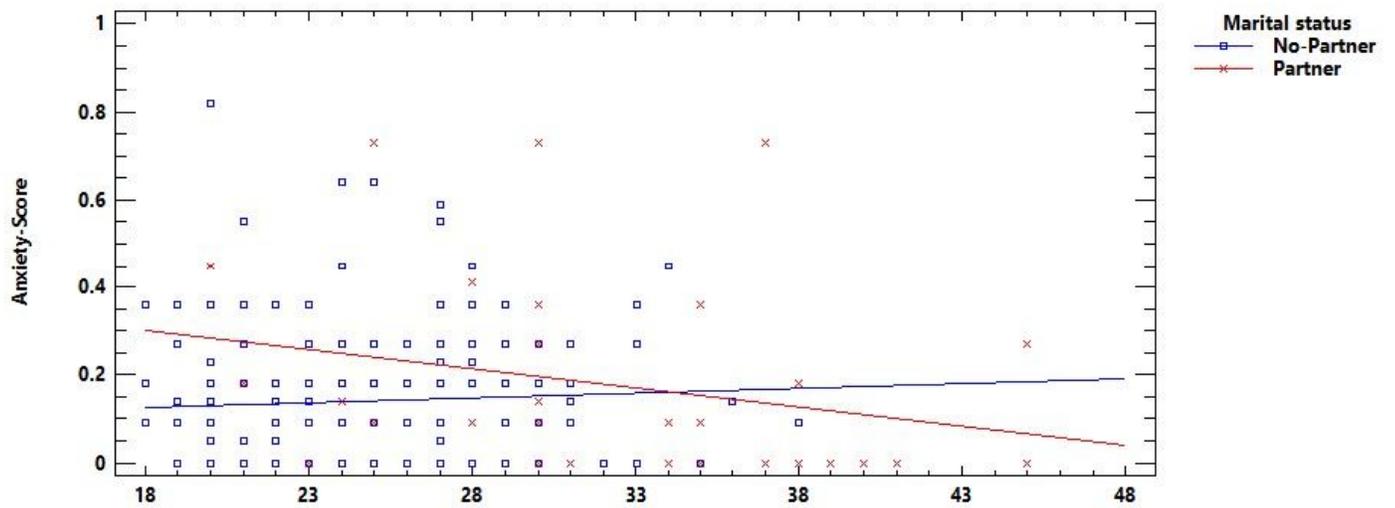


Figure 5

Scatter plot of anger and age, and comparison of regression lines of marital status.

Supplementary Files

This is a list of supplementary files associated with this preprint. Click to download.

- [JohnetalQuestionnaireSportMentalhealth.docx](#)