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Factors influencing the quality of life, 4 participation and performance of youth 5 footballers: a scoping review

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2022
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/34873

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ABSTRACT

Background: Football is one of the most popular sports in the world, with most footballers being younger than 18 years of age. The unique physical, environmental, and personal characteristics of young people can affect their ability to participate and perform well in football, which in turn may influence their QoL. There are many contextual factors to consider when planning health-related intervention strategies to cater to youth footballers. Regarding QoL-, participation-, and performance factors, the research related to youth footballers is disseminated, making knowledge translation difficult. It is necessary to consolidate the research to ensure practitioners are aware of the range of factors influencing the QoL, participation, and performance of youth footballers.

Aim: To map the range of factors influencing the QoL, football participation, and football performance among youth footballers.

Methods: A scoping review was conducted in five stages: 1) clarifying and linking the purpose and research question; 2) assessing the feasibility of scoping process; 3) using an iterative team approach to selecting the studies; 4) extracting the data; and 5) incorporating a numerical summary and qualitative thematic analysis, reporting the results, and considering the implications of study findings to policy, practice, and research.

Database searches were conducted from August 2021 to October 2021. The thirteen databases that were searched through the EBSCO search engine were: Academic Search Ultimate, Africa-Wide Information, CINAHL Complete, Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts, MasterFILE Premier, MEDLINE Complete, Mental Measurements Yearbook, Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition, MEDLINE, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, SocINDEX with Full Text, and SPORTDiscus with Full Text. Two reviewers independently screened data, and one reviewer performed data abstraction. Articles that discussed or

described the factors influencing youth footballers were included in the study. All peer-reviewed qualitative and quantitative studies which have been published in English between 1998 and 2021 were included in this review. Descriptive synthesis was conducted.

Results: After screening 2691 citations and 310 full-texts, 164 articles were included. The types of evidence in this review included 119 cohort studies (72.56% of total), 18 narrative reviews (10.98%), 14 systematic reviews (8.54%), 4 descriptive epidemiology studies (2.44%), 2 meta-analysis studies (1.22%), 2 randomised controlled trials (1.22%), 2 consensus statements (1.22%), 1 cohort report (0.61%), 1 case report (0.61%), and 1 expert opinion article (0.61%). Sixty-seven articles (40.9%) discussed performance. 66 articles (40.2%) discussed QoL. 31 articles (18.9%) discussed participation. Furthermore, seventy-nine (48.17%) of the articles discussed factors related to male footballers, 13 (7.93%) discussed factors related to female footballers, and 72 (43.9%) were not gender specific.

The QoL-related factors that were identified were injury and injury prevention, health behaviour, psychological factors, and social factors. The participation-related factors that were identified were ambitions for career progression and dropout, relative age effect (RAE), talent, and level of competition. The performance-related factors that were identified were body composition, cognitive level, RAE, training, load, recovery, playing surface, birthplace effect, nutrition, and climate.

Clinical implication and conclusions: Through this review, we mapped the range of factors influencing the QoL, participation, and performance among youth footballers. Physiotherapists working with youth footballers must have knowledge of the factors influencing the footballers' sports engagement to implement effective health promotion programs. Further research is required to fill the gaps in the literature.

Keywords: Factors, Quality of life, Participation, Performance, Youth, Football