

The COVID-19 LOCKDOWN'S IMPACT ON SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 is a potentially fatal corona virus pandemic that will affect the entire world in 2020. To control virus transmission, the World Health Organization advised against social distancing and human-to-human contact. The Covid-19 had an unprecedented impact not only on the sports field, but also on society, resulting in the rapid closure of businesses, places of work, social engagement, universities, and schools. Due to Covid-19, the majority of major sporting outdoor and indoor events at the international, regional, and national levels have been cancelled or postponed. The International Olympic Committee, in collaboration with the Japanese government, announced the rescheduling of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. COVID-19 affected not only humans, but also all institutional systems. As a result of the COVID-19 lockdown, many millions of jobs are at risk around the world, not just for sports professionals, but also for those in related retail and sporting services industries that are linked to leagues and events. The disease wreaked havoc on healthy systems all over the world.

Keywords: COVID-19, lockdown, sports, physical activity.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan (China) and quickly spread throughout the world, causing clusters of respiratory illnesses (Graham Carlos et al.; 2020) [1]. (Huang C, Wang Y, Li X, et al.; 2020) [2]. The highly contagious viral infection is caused by the virus known as SARS-CoV2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2), which genomic analysis revealed is genetically related to the SARS outbreak (Lu R, Zhao X, Li J, et al.; 2020). [3]. Coronavirus 2 caused Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, which resulted in a large number of deaths in 2002-2003. (Ksiazek TG et al.; 2003) [8]. The virus that primarily affects the respiratory system and causes symptoms such as fever, dyspnea, myalgia, fatigue, and so on. Despite the fact that younger people were the first to be infected with COVID-19 (Li Q et al.; 2020) [9]. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic three months later, on March 11, 2020 (Virtual Press Conference; 2020) [5]. By the beginning of March 2020, over 1 million cases of Covid-19 had been reported in 90 countries worldwide, prompting the World Health Organization to declare Covid-19 a "Global Pandemic" (Kanties et al., 2020) [6]. As the year 2020 progressed, Covid-19 continued to spread, with over 160 million cases and 3.3 million deaths worldwide since the pandemic began on May 13, 2021 (WHO; 2021) [4]. Due to the continued spread of COVID-19, the Indian government declared a lockdown to protect individuals from infection with COVID-19. Due to the lockdown, most people's daily activities will be impacted by limited regular physical activities, exercises, and outdoor activities (Pulla P.; 2020) [10]. Staying at home for an extended period of time leads to secondary

behaviours such as spending more time sitting, such as playing games or watching television, and decreasing regular outdoor activities and exercises, which increases the risk of chronic health conditions (Owen N. et al.; 2010) [11]. In the absence of protective vaccination, the government used a social distancing or lockdown strategy, implementing travel bans, closing crowded public places such as temples, malls, and markets, as well as schools and colleges (Singh R. et al.; 2020) [12]. The application of lockdown due to COVID-19 affects people's mental health as well as their physical health due to reduced physical activity in their daily routine life.

Covid-19's Influence on Sports

Since its inception, the COVID-19 pandemic has spread almost everywhere in the world, causing social and physical measures, such as lockdowns of businesses, schools, or colleges, and overall social life, to become commonplace in order to slow the spread of the diseases. These measures have also disrupted daily regular aspects of life, such as sports and physical activity. The challenges to the sporting world are highlighted in this COVID-19 lockdown policy brief. Because of the rapid spread of the coronavirus, which has resulted in the loss of over a million human lives worldwide, most major sporting indoor and outdoor events at regional, national, and international levels have been postponed, cancelled, or relocated without spectators (Malcolm and Velija; 2020, Parnell et al. 2020) [13, 14]. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on sporting events, with global events such as the Olympics being postponed by nearly a year. On March 30, 2020, the International Olympic Committee and the Japanese government announced that the 2020 Tokyo Olympics would be rescheduled for July

2021, while keeping the name 2020 Tokyo Olympic (IOC; 2020).

In the history of these great games, the Olympic Games have never been cancelled due to a medical issue (Dhillon MS; 2020) [15]. It is a major setback not only for Japan, which will suffer massive financial losses, but also for the 11,000 Olympic athletes and 4400 Paralympians who will compete in this mega sports event. The Olympics provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for athletes to demonstrate their talent and worth in front of the world. Every athlete works extremely hard to prepare and train for it.

FIFA announced on March 13, 2020, that football clubs were not required to release players for national teams during the months of March and April 2020, and that players had the option of rejecting a call-up with no reaction. FIFA also recommended that all international matches be postponed during these times, though the final decision was left to competition organisers or member associations for friendly matches (FIFA; 2020) [16]. The International Cricket Council announced in July 2020 that the ICC Men's T-20 World Cups in 2020 and 2021 had been postponed by one year due to the pandemic. As a result, the tournament was moved to November 2021 and October 2022, in that order (ICC; 2020) [17]. The right to host the tournament was retained by India in 2021 and Australia in 2020, as announced by the ICC on August 8 (ICC; 2020) [19]. The ICC also confirmed on August 8 that the 2021 Women's Cricket World Cup 2021 and the tournament's qualifier had been postponed by one year due to the pandemic (BBC Sport; 2020) [23].

Other sporting events that are considering a reduced format or event cancellation include the Wimbledon championship, the athletics championship to basketball, marathons to football tournaments, handball to ice hockey, cricket, rugby, skiing, weightlifting to wrestling, and more. The postponement of major competitions such as the Olympics, Nationals, and Internationals would undoubtedly jeopardise the professional careers of several top athletes. When discussing the impact of the COVID-19-related break in competition, it is important to consider the factors that influence a player's performance.

It can be stated that player performance is highly dependent on many factors between matches such as match importance, location, opposition, score, number of recovery days, and tactical system (Paul, Bradley, & Nassisi; 2015) [24]. As a result of the

COVID-19 lockdown, many millions of jobs are at risk around the world, not only for sports professionals but also for those in related retail and all types of services and industries related to sports that are connected with leagues and sports events, such as goods transportation, infrastructure facility, travel, tourism, catering, and media broadcasting among sports. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, educational institutions around the world have closed, affecting the sports education sector, which is made up of a diverse range of stakeholders, including local authorities and national ministries, public and private educational institutions, sports organisations, NGOs, and the business community, teachers, scholars, coaches, athletes, parents, and, most importantly, students.

Covid-19's Influence on Physical Activity

COVID-19 resulted in the cancellation of athletic events, the closure of gyms, stadiums, pools, dance and fitness facilities, physiotherapy clinics, parks, and a ban on all outside activities. These considerations prompted athletes to alter their workout regimens and train at home, the majority of which are not monitored by medical personnel or professional coaches. Several sportsmen use tiny gyms or exercise equipment at home to train on their own during lockdown. The goal of the home activity period is for them to maintain or at least not lose their present level of physical fitness (Torsdahl BG & Asif IM; 2020) [25]. However, many people are unable to actively participate in their usual solo or group athletic or physical activities outside of their homes. The immune system and its anti-viral defences are affected by daily exercise (Walsh NP, Gleeson M, Shephard RJ; 2011 & Martin SA, Pence BD, Woods JA; 2009) [27, 28]. However, public health advice like as stay-at-home orders and the closure of parks, gymnasiums, stadiums, and fitness centres to avoid the spread of SARS-CoV-2 have the potential to limit daily physical activity. These recommendations are unfortunate because daily exercise may help combat the disease by strengthening our immune systems and counteracting some of the co-morbidities such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and serious heart conditions that make us more vulnerable to COVID-19 illness (Siordia JA; 2020) [26].

The COVID-19 lockdown affects not just physical activity but also the emotional wellness of the players. Cancelling and rescheduling sporting events brings uncertainty to the lives of athletes and players. Most professional athletes or players are worried in this circumstance because they must face and deal with all of the fears that lie ahead. This

period of uncertainty about the uncertain future may increase the feelings of worry, tension, and anxiety (Grupe DW, Nitschke JB; 2013) [29].

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 epidemic has continued to have a significant impact on the athletic world as well as the physical activity of athletes worldwide. The Covid-19 had an unparalleled influence not just on the sporting field, but also on society, resulting in the abrupt shutdown of companies, workplaces, social interaction, universities, and schools. Most significant outdoor and indoor sporting events at the world, regional, and national levels have been cancelled or postponed as a result of Covid-19. As a result of the COVID-19 shutdown, many millions of jobs are at danger throughout the world, not just for sports professionals, but also for those in associated retail and athletic services businesses that are linked to leagues and tournaments. The illness wreaked havoc on healthy systems all around the planet.

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