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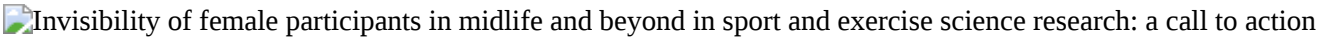

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Invisibility of female participants in midlife and beyond in sport and exercise science research: a call to action

As the number of females participating in sport and exercise has increased and moved towards parity with males, under-standing the specific needs of sports-women has become increasingly essential. Sadly, the imbalance between the representation of females and males in sport and exercise science research is well- known.

For example, in 2021, we published ‘Invisible Sportswomen’: The Sex Data Gap in Sport and Exercise Science Research, which conducted an exploration of the ratio of males and females as participants in sport and exercise science research.1

Results revealed that within 5261 studies, across six popular sport and exercise science journals, females accounted for 34% of total participants, with as little as 6% of studies focusing exclusively on females.

However, it is likely that these numbers would be further reduced when investigating the representation of women in midlife and beyond (ie, those who are perimenopausal or post-menopausal) within these female- only studies.

While studies in midlife men as participants may also be similarly low and warrant further investigation, in this editorial, we examine the inclusion of female participants in midlife and beyond in sport and exercise science research, highlight the need to include female participants in the midlife and beyond and provide a call to action for researchers in this area to bridge the current data and knowledge gap for perimenopausal and postmenopausal women.

[See the report here.]

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