

Are Team Sports Effective in Improving Mental Health? A Systematic Review on the Primary Outcomes of Anxiety and Mood



Augusto Cezar Rodrigues Rocha^{1,✉} , Alberto Souza Sá Filho^{2,3,*} , Marcelo Couto Jorge Rodrigues¹ , José Carlos Pontes Corrêa¹ , Matias Noll⁴ , Filipe Manuel Clemente^{5,6} , Mário Hebling Campos¹ , Vicente Aprigliano⁷, Sérgio Machado^{3,8,9} , Carlos Alexandre Vieira¹  and Gustavo De Conti Teixeira Costa^{1,✉} 

¹Faculdade de Educação Física e Dança, Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiânia, Brasil

²Graduate Program in Human Movement and Rehabilitation, Evangelical University of Goiás - UniEVANGÉLICA, Anápolis, Goiás, Brazil

³Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical Sciences, Pharmacology and Therapeutics (PPGCFFT), Evangelical University of Goiás - UniEVANGÉLICA, Anápolis, Goiás, Brazil

⁴Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia Goiano, Ceres, Brasil

⁵Gdansk University of Physical Education and Sport, 80-336 Gdańsk, Poland

⁶Sport Physical Activity and Health Research & Innovation Center, Rio Maior, Portugal

⁷Escuela de Ingeniería de Construcción y Transporte, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Avda Brasil 2147, Valparaíso, Chile

⁸Laboratory of Physical Activity Neuroscience, Neurodiversity Institute, Queimados-RJ, Brazil

⁹LABPR - Panic and Respiration Laboratory (LABPR) - Institute of Psychiatry (IPUB), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Bentham Open.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License (CC-BY 4.0), a copy of which is available at: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>. This license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.



*Address correspondence to this author at the Alberto Sá Filho, Graduate Program at the Evangelical University of Goiás (UniEVANGÉLICA). Av. Universitária, s/n - Cidade Universitária, Anápolis - GO; E-mail: doutor.alberto@outlook.com

[✉]The authors equally contributed to the development of this research

Published: July 02, 2026



Cite as: Rodrigues Rocha A, Filho A, Jorge Rodrigues M, Pontes Corrêa J, Noll M, Clemente F, Campos M, Aprigliano V, Machado S, Vieira C, Costa G. Are Team Sports Effective in Improving Mental Health? A Systematic Review on the Primary Outcomes of Anxiety and Mood. Clin Pract Epidemiol Ment Health, 2026; 22: e17450179471779. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/0117450179471779260627171341>

Send Orders for Reprints to reprints@benthamscience.net

Table S1. List of included articles, as well as the reasons.

Author	Title	Year	Source	Status	Observations	Decision
Rhodes <i>et al.</i> 2025	Effect of recreational sport and physical activity participation on well-being during early parenthood: a randomized controlled trial	2025	Cochrane and EMBASE	Y	Related	Confirmed
Pedersen <i>et al.</i> 2017	Effect of team sports and resistance training on physical function, quality of life, and motivation in older adults	2017	Cochrane and Scopus and PUBMED	Y	Related	Confirmed
Filippou <i>et al.</i> 2025	Effects of an exercise and sport intervention on symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health indices among asylum seekers in a camp. A pragmatic randomized controlled trial	2025	Scopus	Y	Related	Confirmed

Author	Title	Year	Source	Status	Observations	Decision
Johnston <i>et al.</i> 2021	Effects of team sports on anxiety, depression, perceived stress, and sleep quality in college students	2021	Scopus	Y	Related	Confirmed
Barene and Krustrup, 2022	Football and Zumba Training in Female Hospital Staff: Effects after 12 and 40 Weeks on Self-Reported Health Status, Emotional Wellbeing, General Self-Efficacy and Sleep Problems	2022	PUBMED	Y	Related	Confirmed
Romdhani <i>et al.</i> 2024	Small-sided-games with coaches' verbal encouragement have a positive effect on aerobic performance, mood state, satisfaction and subjective effort in male semi-professional soccer players	2024	Scopus	Y	Related	Confirmed

Table S2. List of excluded articles, as well as the reasons.

Author	Title	Year	Source	Status	Observations	Decision
Xu and Sun, 2021	Campus Football Activities On Relieving College Students' Social Anxiety	2021	Cochrane	N	Related	Not included. This is a Abstract
Fu <i>et al.</i> 2025	Group sports games for social anxiety in university students: a randomized controlled trial revealing gender-specific efficacy	2025	Scopus	N	Related	Not included. This is group recreation.
Filaire <i>et al.</i> 2001	Preliminary results on mood state, salivary testosterone:cortisol ratio and team performance in a professional soccer team	2001	PUBMED	N	Related	Not Included. Athletes population

DISCLAIMER: The above article has been published, as is, ahead-of-print, to provide early visibility but is not the final version. Major publication processes like copyediting, proofing, typesetting and further review are still to be done and may lead to changes in the final published version, if it is eventually published. All legal disclaimers that apply to the final published article also apply to this ahead-of-print version.