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Go the blues: Kiwis who play team sports less likely to report depression, anxiety or stress

They say there's no 'I' in team – and it seems there's not much depression, anxiety or stress either. Kiwi adults who play team sports are noticeably less likely than the average to experience these mental health conditions, the latest findings from Roy Morgan Research show.

Over 2013-2014, 10% of New Zealanders aged 18+ reported experiencing depression at some point during the year, compared with just 6% of those who regularly play a team sport*. Some 9% overall suffered from anxiety, well above the 6% of regular team sport players. 18% of Kiwis experienced stress compared with 15% of team sports players.

This difference is most striking among Kiwis aged 35-49 or 50+, with team sports participants in those groups reporting depression and anxiety at rates at least 50% below the norm. Across all age groups, anxiety, depression and stress are each less common among people who regularly play team sports.

Lower rates of depression, anxiety and stress in team sports participants

| Age Group | % who experienced depression in last 12 months | | % who experienced anxiety in last 12 months | | % who experienced stress in last 12 months | |
|--------------|--|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | All People | Regular team sport participants | All People | Regular team sport participants | All People | Regular team sport participants |
| 18-24 years | 12% | 7% | 11% | 7% | 21% | 19% |
| 25-34 years | 12% | 7% | 12% | 7% | 23% | 13% |
| 35-49 years | 10% | 5% | 11% | 5% | 21% | 13% |
| 50+ years | 7% | 3% | 7% | 3% | 14% | 12% |
| Total | 10% | 6% | 9% | 6% | 18% | 15% |

Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (New Zealand), November 2012 – October 2014 (n=22,729). **Base:** New Zealanders 18+.
NB: Team sports include: Basketball, Cricket, Field Hockey, Netball, Touch Rugby, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Soccer, Softball, Baseball and Volleyball.

John La Rosa, Client Services New Zealand, Roy Morgan Research, says:

“Everybody knows sport is good for you: its fitness and weight-loss benefits are well known and widely promoted. But the positive impact of team sport on mental and emotional well-being is just as important, with some far-reaching implications.

“As our latest findings show, people who regularly participate in team sports from netball to touch rugby to cricket are much less likely to suffer from anxiety, stress or depression than other Kiwis.

“Whether it's due to the endorphin rush of high-impact exercise, the satisfaction of working towards a shared goal, the social support system that comes with being part of a team, or a

combination of all these factors, the overall benefit of team sport on mental health is undeniable.

“Not only is this good news for the people directly involved, but also for the wider population, as it eases the pressure on our already stretched healthcare system.”

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan Research’s sport and health data, please contact:

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About Roy Morgan Research

Roy Morgan Research is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan Research has over 70 years’ experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

| Sample Size | Percentage Estimate | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | 40%-60% | 25% or 75% | 10% or 90% | 5% or 95% |
| 5,000 | ±1.4 | ±1.2 | ±0.8 | ±0.6 |
| 7,500 | ±1.1 | ±1.0 | ±0.7 | ±0.5 |
| 10,000 | ±1.0 | ±0.9 | ±0.6 | ±0.4 |
| 20,000 | ±0.7 | ±0.6 | ±0.4 | ±0.3 |
| 50,000 | ±0.4 | ±0.4 | ±0.3 | ±0.2 |