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Prevalence of Male Sexual Harassment among Female Sports Participants in Greece

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Abstract

This article presents data from a study that surveyed gender relations in sports. The main objective of the paper is to explore the prevalence of sexual harassment performed by men toward Greek female athletes and exercisers. Three hundred and eight women (Mage = 21.45) who were active in sports either at the international level, the national level, or were exercisers, participated in the study. The results show that overall 71.5% of the participants had experienced some form of sexually harassing behavior from a man. Experiences of sexual harassment performed by men both inside and outside the sport domain were reported. While, variations among athletes' performance levels and sexual harassment from men outside sport were significant ($p < .05$) as exercisers reported experiencing significantly more sexual harassment; variations among athletes' levels and harassment from men inside sport were non-significant. The form of sexual harassment the participants reported experiencing the most was 'repeated unwanted sexually suggestive glances, comments, jokes, etc'. The findings are discussed in relation to the country's gender order, gender equality laws as well as the anti-sexual harassment laws inside and outside sport organizations.

Key words: *Sexual harassment, females, athletes, exercisers, Greece*

Βιώματα Σεξουαλικής Παρενόχλησης από Άνδρες σε Αθλήτριες στην Ελλάδα

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Περίληψη

Αυτό το άρθρο παρουσιάζει στοιχεία από μια μεγαλύτερη μελέτη που εξέτασε τις έμφυλες σχέσεις στον αθλητισμό. Ο κύριος σκοπός αυτού του άρθρου είναι να διερευνηθούν τα βιώματα σεξουαλικής παρενόχλησης από άνδρες σε Ελληνίδες που συμμετέχουν σε διάφορα επίπεδα του αθλητισμού. Τριακόσιες-οκτώ γυναίκες (ΜΟ ηλικίας = 21.45) που δραστηριοποιούνται στο διεθνές, στο εθνικό αγωνιστικό επίπεδο και ως συστηματικά αθλούμενες, συμμετείχαν στη μελέτη. Τα αποτελέσματα δείχνουν ότι 72% των αθλητριών και αθλούμενων ανέφερε εμπειρίες σεξουαλικής παρενόχλησης από άνδρες εντός και εκτός του αθλητισμού. Οι παρενοχλήσεις από άνδρες εντός αθλητισμού δε διέφεραν στατιστικά με βάση το επίπεδο εμπειρίας των αθλητριών, ενώ οι παρενοχλήσεις από άνδρες εκτός αθλητικού χώρου διέφεραν σημαντικά. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, οι αθλούμενες ανέφεραν περισσότερα βιώματα από άνδρες εκτός αθλητικού χώρου ($p < .05$) συγκριτικά με τις αθλήτριες εθνικού και διεθνές επιπέδου. Η μορφή σεξουαλικής παρενόχλησης που αναφέρθηκε συχνότερα από τις συμμετέχουσες ήταν 'τα επαναλαμβανόμενα ανεπιθύμητα σεξουαλικά υπονοούμενα, βλέμματα, σχόλια, αστεία, κ.λπ.'. Τα ευρήματα της έρευνας ερμηνεύονται με βάση την ιεραρχία των φύλων, τους ισχύοντες νόμους περί ισότητας των δυο φύλων και σεξουαλικής παρενόχλησης.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: *Σεξουαλική παρενόχληση, αθλήτριες, αθλούμενες, Ελλάδα*

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Introduction

Sexual harassment appears to be one of the most widespread forms of sexual victimization (International, Regional, and National Developments in the Area of Violence against Women 1994-2003, 2003); yet it remains an underreported issue. Although studies on sexual harassment in the workplace and the educational setting have been carried out since the 1970s; worldwide, little is known about sexual harassment in the sport domain (Fasting & Brackenridge, 2007). Research has been done primarily in the developed Western countries (e.g., Canada, Australia, Norway, etc.). Both qualitative and quantitative investigations have been carried out exploring the incidence and the prevalence of sexual harassment in sport (see Fasting, Brackenridge, Sundgot-Borgen, 2003; Fasting Brackenridge, & Walseth, 2007; Kirby, Greaves, & Hankivsky, 2000; Leahy, Pretty, & Tenenbaum, 2002). Sport organizations have been discussed by researchers as potential cultures in which sexual harassment may occur, due to unbalanced gender ratios, sexualized atmospheres, and organizational power that have been found to influence both the incidence and maintenance of sexual harassment in the workplace and the academia (Fasting, Brackenridge, Sungdot-Borgen, 2004). Nonetheless, recent reports from National Olympic Committees show that female athletes both in Czech Republic and in Norway experience more sexual harassment from men outside the world of sport than from men inside sport (Fasting, Brackenridge, & Sundgot-Borgen, 2000; Fasting & Knorre, 2005).

Considering the impact of sexual harassment on a victim's life, based on our knowledge from mainstream psychology and sociology, these experiences may seriously influence a person's psychological wellbeing, social life and physical self. In a qualitative sport-specific study, Fasting, Brackenridge, and Walseth (2002) explored what happens to female athletes subsequent to having been sexually harassed. The athletes talked about changes in their behavior towards coaches and peer athletes, negative consequences on their performance, and some of them were led to drop out of sport altogether. The most frequently reported psychological consequences were recurrently thinking or reflecting on the experience, experiencing a negative impact on their self-esteem, and heightened anxiety. Moreover, sexual harassment impacts the equal opportunities of participation and achievement for girls and women in sports, which in turn impairs the quality of their lives. Taking into account the psycho-social impact of sexual harassment experiences along with the lack of knowledge on its prevalence in Greek sports, the au-

thors' initiative for the present paper was formulated in order to answer a main question: *What is the amount of sexually harassing behavior experienced by Greek women who participate in sport at various performance levels?*

Sexual Harassment in Greece

With an eight month delay, sexual harassment as a wrongful act for the state of Greece was defined in August 2006 adhering to a European Union Council and Parliament Directive (European Parliament, 2002) for the equal treatment of men and women in employment. This directive prohibited sexual harassment in the workplace as a form of sex discrimination and violation of an individual's dignity. The directive required all member states to have a definition and law in effect by December of 2005. In Greece, sexual harassment was defined as "any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurring, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment." (see law 3488/2006). This law is in effect for both public and private work sectors in Greece. Educational institutions, or other voluntary organizations, such as sport clubs are not covered by the existing law. In the world of sport, according to the International Olympic Committee's Consensus Statement (2007) "*Sexual harassment* refers to a behavior towards an individual or group that involves sexualized verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior, whether intended or unintended, legal or illegal, that is based upon an abuse of power and trust and that is considered by the victim or a bystander to be unwanted or coerced." (p. 3).

The first nationwide survey in Greece on sexual harassment prevalence in the workplace was conducted by the Center for Research on Equality Issues (Artinopoulou & Papatheodorou, 2004), whereas a few smaller, regional studies have been completed on the same topic (Mitsopoulou et al. 2005; Stafida, Stafidas & Kandas, 2002b) as well as in the area of higher education (Pendaraki, 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009 et al). The largest nationwide survey of 1,200 working women revealed that 15% of them were aware of women within their family, friends, and/or colleagues who had experienced sexual harassment (Artinopoulou and Papatheodorou, 2004). Moreover, 10% of them had experienced harassing behaviors themselves. The abovementioned smaller studies, most of them unpublished, also found that sexual harassment does occur in the academic and work setting in Greece. In the existing literature, no sport-specific studies were found on the social phenomenon of sexual harassment in Greece.

In a thorough review of the literature, Chroni, Kourtesopoulou and Kouli (2007) present several operational definitions of sexual harassment put forward by the European Union and international women's sports organizations, along with research evidence on psychological, social, and day-to-day consequences of sexual harassment experiences for female athletes. Additionally, they discuss ideas and policies for the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment occurrences that could be implemented in Greek sports.

Prevalence of Sexual Harassment in other Countries

In the Czech Republic's Olympic Committee Report (Fasting & Knorre 2005), 72% of 595 female athletes and exercisers reported experiences of some form of sexual harassment. The female athletes had more often experienced harassment from someone outside the sport setting (58%) than from someone inside sport (45%). The form of sexual harassment most often reported was "unwanted repetitive sexual glances, comments, jokes, etc" at 58% followed by "ridiculing of sport performance and self" at 37% and "unwanted physical contact" at 31%. Interestingly, as female athletes' performance level increased so did the chances to experience harassment from someone inside sport; 55% of the elite athletes reported such experiences while only 33% of the exercisers did. However, sexual harassment by someone outside sport was a higher risk for exercisers (73 %) than elite athletes (54 %). According to the report of the Norwegian Olympic Committee and Confederation of Sport (Fasting et al., 2000), based on a sample of 572 women athletes and 574 women non-athletes, 45% of the athletes and 47% of the non-athletes reported experiences of sexual harassment and abuse from men. The authors also reported that female athletes experienced more sexual harassment from a man outside sport (39%) than from one inside sport (28%). With respect to the athletes' experience level, a higher prevalence of sexual harassment was found among the very best athletes (i.e., competed at a World Championship and/or Olympic Games) compared to the elite level female athletes who had not participated in such high level of international competition.

Kirby, Greaves and Hankivsky (2000) surveyed the total population of Canada's high performance and recently retired Olympic athletes (N = 1,200) on sexual harassment and abuse in sport and found that 22% reported having had sexual intercourse with persons in positions of authority in sport. In the USA, Volkwein, Schnell, Sherwood, and Livezy (1997) revealed that more than 33% of the student participants in their study were involved in "potentially intimidating" athlete-coach

interactions. From an original sample of 2,118 Australian athletes, Leahy, Pretty, & Tenenbaum (2002) reported that among the 370 respondents 31% of the female and 21% of male athletes had experienced sexual abuse at some time in their lives. Of the sexually abused athletes, 41% of females and 29% of males had been sexually abused within the sport environment. Fejgin and Hanegby (2001) explored 301 Israeli female sport students' experiences of sexual harassment. They found that 14% of them had experienced sexual harassment in sport and 27% had experiences in other social settings. Within the group of women who were harassed in sport, 26% reported severe cases of harassment and 62% reported mild cases.

A major problem is that most studies on sexual harassment cannot be straightforwardly compared due to differences in sampling procedures, methodological approaches, vocabulary and meaning of questionnaire items, anonymity and confidentiality of disclosures, statistical analyses employed, etc. (Barak 1997). In addition, some studies have explored incidents among male and female athletes, while other studies have explored only the female athletes' experiences. Lastly, some of the abovementioned studies, have been also criticized for low response rates which raises crucial questions about underreporting and bias in the data (e.g., Kirby et al., 2000 and Leahy et al., 2002). Nevertheless, they provide a valid warning for the necessity of protective measures based on sexual harassment prevalence within the world of sports.

In recognition of the need for a safe sport environment, in February 2007, the International Olympic Committee's Medical Committee released a consensus statement on sexual harassment and abuse in sport, calling for the development of national policies and procedures on the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse, as well as the development of educational and training programs. Among other things, they also urged all international sport federations and national Olympic committees to promote and support scientific research on issues relating to sexual harassment prevention. The main objective of this paper was to explore the prevalence of sexual harassment performed by men as experienced by Greek female athletes. Acquiring data on personal experiences of sexual harassment occurrences was deemed to be a fundamental step for Greece, adhering to the IOC recommendations in order to develop protective policies and educational material for all individuals involved in sports. More specifically, the research questions answered in this paper are: 1) *What is the prevalence of male sexual harassment experienced by Greek female athletes inside and outside sport?* 2) *Are there any differences in the Greek female*

athletes' experiences of sexual harassment forms performed by men inside and outside sport? 3) Does the prevalence of sexual harassment performed by men inside and outside sport differ in relation to the female athletes' performance level?

Methods

Participants

A total of 308 Greek women participated in this study. The mean age of the participants was 21.45 (+2.90) years of old. They reported practicing an average of 4.71 (+2.05) times per week and typically spent 11.09 (+7.16) hours per week practicing outside of competition. At data collection time, 55.5% were coached by a man, 19.8% were coached by a woman, and 24% did not have a coach at that time. Furthermore, 42.8% lived alone, 56.8% lived with others (i.e., parents, partners, and other people) and two of them had children. Twenty-six of them were working, 267 were studying, and 15 of them were unemployed. Family/partner support was the major income source for these women, followed by making their own money, and then income provided by their sport club and/or sport federation.

The participants were active in a variety of individual sports (N = 167; e.g., track-and-field, swimming, tennis, gymnastics, etc), team sports (N = 103; e.g., basketball, volleyball, handball, softball, etc.), and non-competitive sports (N = 28; e.g., aerobics, jogging, dance). Within two years prior to data collection, 63.6% of the women had competed in their respective sport, while 36.4% of them only practiced regularly without competing. For data analyses purposes' the participants were categorized into three groups based on their highest level of competitive experience within the last 2 years: the international level athletes (29.2%) (i.e., had competed in either Olympic Games, World or European competitions), the national level athlete (34.4%) (i.e., had competed at various Hellenic competitions), and the exercisers (36.4%) (i.e., practiced a sport regularly but had not competed in the last two years). With regard to international competitive experiences, the highest competition level recorded by them was: the European Championship/Cup circuit for 12.3%, the World Championship/Cup circuit for 11.4%, and the Olympic Games for 5.5% of them.

Procedures

Sexual harassment is a complex term to define and to measure. It appears to be common practice for women to report experiencing unwanted sexually harassing behaviors, but not label them as sexual harassment (Welsh, Carr, MacQuarrie, &

Huntley, 2006). In the present study in order to overcome the gap between objectively and subjectively defined sexual harassment (see Barak, 1997), the term sexual harassment was nowhere used in the questionnaire. Instead, the women were asked if they had ever experienced any of the following three situations:

- *Unwanted physical contact, body contact (for example pinching, hugging, fondling, being kissed against their will, etc).*
- *Repeated unwanted sexually suggestive glances, comments, teasing and jokes, about their body, their clothes, their private life etc.*
- *Ridiculing of their sport performance and of themselves as athletes because of their gender or their sexuality (for example 'Soccer is not suitable for girls').*

The reason for asking these three questions was that they were the most frequently answered from a total of 11 questions asked in the Norwegian study mentioned earlier (Fasting et al. 2000) and also used in the Czech Republic study (Fasting & Knorre, 2005). The participants were asked to mark if they had experienced any of these three forms of sexual harassment from: a male coach, a male athlete, a male member of the management team, a male teacher, male student, a male family member, or other males outside family/sport.

Participation was on a volunteer basis and the questionnaires were answered at each athlete's practice site in the presence of the first author or a research assistant and in the absence of other people. The study was reviewed and approved by the first author's Departmental Ethics Committee. Anonymity secured confidentiality for the participants. In addition, the results hereafter are presented in such a way that makes it impossible to recognize any individual or specific sport. The data was coded and analyzed using SPSS.15 for Windows. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations were generated. Two-way chi-square (χ^2) was used to explore variations among the participants' performance levels. A two-way χ^2 test is used to evaluate the relationship between the observed counts of two categorical variables. The non-parametric binomial test was used to explore variations in the participants' sexual harassment experiences from men inside and outside sport. A binomial test is an exact test on the statistical significance of deviation from one distribution of observations in a category (i.e., harassment from men inside sport) compared to the distribution of observations in another category (i.e., harassment from men outside sport). In presenting the results, experience(s) of sexual harassment signifies that an individual had marked one or more forms of sexual harassment; it does not indicate the severity, frequency or total volume of their experiences.

Table 1. Sexual harassment and forms of sexual harassment experienced by women from men inside and outside sport. (*: Significant variations between SH performed by men from inside and outside sport, $p < .001$)

	from Men in total	from Men Inside Sport	from Men Outside Sport
Unwanted physical contact, body contact (e.g., pinching, hugging, fondling, being kissed against their will, etc).	126(42.1%)	63(21.1%)	95(31.8%)*
Repeated unwanted sexually suggestive glances, comments, teasing, jokes, about their body, their clothes, private life etc.	171(56.8%)	74(24.6%)	143(47.5%)*
Ridiculing of their sport performance and of themselves as athletes because of their gender or their sexuality	117(38.9%)	53(17.6%)	91(30.2%)*
Overall experiences of sexual harassment	216(71.5%)	126(42.0%)	192(63.6%)*

Results

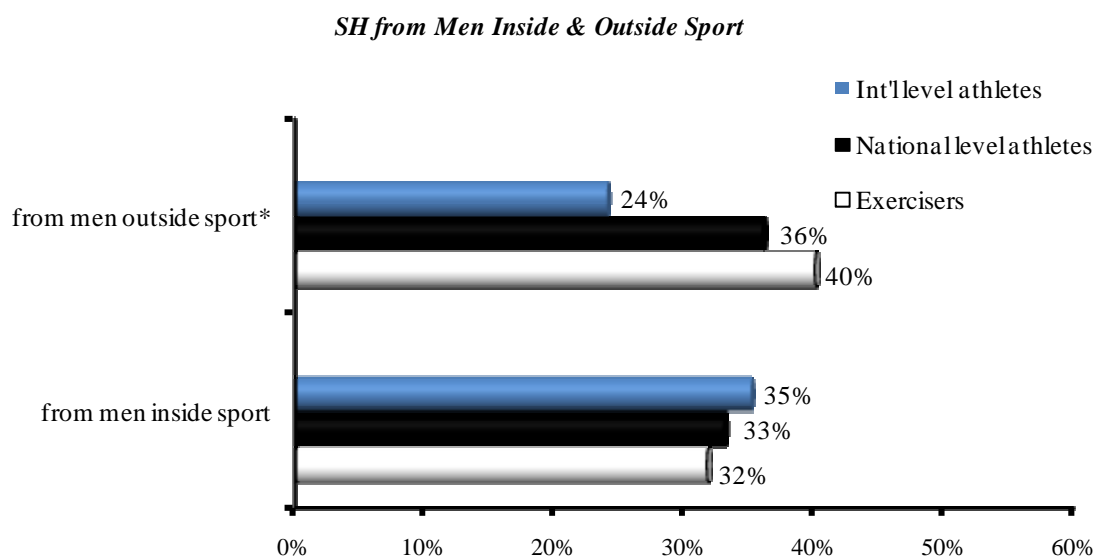
Prevalence & Forms of Sexual Harassment from Men

Overall, 71.5% of the 308 Greek female sport participants reported having experienced one or more of the three sexual harassment forms from men. When looking at the environment of the harasser, athletes reported significantly more sexual harassment experiences from men outside the world of sport (42%) than from men inside the world of sport (64%) ($p = .000$). This was also the case for all three forms of sexual harassment.

With regard to the forms of sexual harassment experienced from men, they reported 'repeated unwanted sexually suggestive comments, glances, jokes, etc.' at 57%, 'unwanted physical contact' at the percentage of 42, and 'ridiculing of them as women and their sport performances' at 39%. These forms were experienced in the exact same order either performed by men inside sport or by men outside sport (See Table 1).

Sexual harassment and athletes' performance levels

The participants' overall experiences of sexual harassment from men with respect to their performance level, showed no significant variations ($p > .05$). The results revealed that the exercisers (38.4%) experienced the highest amount of sexual harassment, followed by the national level competitors (35.2%) and then the international competitors (26.4%). Non-significant variations among the athletes' performance levels ($p > .05$) on the sexual harassment experiences from men inside sports were also found. However, significant variations were calculated among the observed counts of the three performance levels and the sexual harassment experienced by men outside sport ($\chi^2 = 7.741$; $df = 2$; $p = .021$). In particular, there were reported significantly more experiences of sexual harassment from men outside sport by the exercisers (40.1%) followed by the national level athletes (35.9%) and then the international athletes (24%) (See Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Greek female athletes' experiences of sexual harassment performed by men inside and outside sport based on their performance level.

Discussion

The main objective of the present study was to explore the prevalence of sexual harassment performed by men toward Greek women who had recently competed at the international level, the national level, and those who just practiced regularly but had not competed recently. As mentioned earlier *experience(s) of sexual harassment* signified that an individual reported experiencing one or more forms of sexual harassment as explored in this study; while the severity, frequency or total volume of the experiences were not explored here. Under-reporting of sexually harassing behaviors is likely to have occurred since sexual harassment is treated as a societal taboo in Greece (Artinopoulou & Papatheodorou, 2004). Underreporting is a typical problem with sensitive social issues such as sexual harassment. The impact of sexual harassment, even in its lighter form, can still be severe (Dansky & Kilpatrick, 1997; Fasting, Brackenridge, & Walseth, 2002). Many victims suffer from guilt and shame, which may lead to underreporting because one does not feel comfortable in disclosing sexually harassing experiences on a questionnaire. In addition, it should be mentioned that respondents were asked to report on their past experiences which entails the possibility that experiences of sexual harassment were forgotten or suppressed. Furthermore, to overcome the frequent criticism of comparing studies with different operational and methodological approaches, comparisons were not done, while any generalizations made toward other Greek studies should be limited and be treated with great caution.

In summarizing our findings, the overall percentage of sexual harassment experiences reported in this study was very high. About two thirds of the women experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment. With regard to the harasser's environment, men outside the world of sport tend to sexually harass female sport participants more, compared to men inside sports. No differences were found among international athletes, national, and exercisers on their experiences of sexual harassment from men inside sport, whereas significant differences were found among the participants who were harassed by men outside sport. In that case, the exercisers reported significantly more experiences by men outside than the national competitors and the international competitors.

In interpreting these findings, we take into account the gender order in the Greek society as well as the existing laws on equality and sexual harassment. It has been argued that sexual harass-

ment is mainly about control and power (Brackenridge, 2001), and especially the kind of power that is based on the gender order and masculine dominance over women. According to the closing remarks of an early sexual harassment conference in Greece, "sexual harassment is an expression of the harasser's presumed social superiority, even if he does not occupy a higher position in the hierarchy. The act of harassment is used to keep women in their place and in their traditional role." (p. 177, Conclusions of the 1994 NGO "Women's Democratic Movement" Congress in Athens on sexual harassment in Greece, as cited by the Spanish Study, (European Commission, 1998). In view of that, male dominance and use of power over women, along with sustaining the traditional gender roles appear to be the most prominent explanations for the phenomenon of sexual harassment.

This line of thinking may also explain why exercisers experience significantly more sexual harassment from men outside sports, followed by nationally and internationally experienced competitors. It is possible that exercisers and national level athletes due to the less formal and more private-type social-interpersonal relationships are subjected to more harassing behavior.

Although the differences were not significant, when the harassers were from inside the world of sport it was the international athletes who experienced the most harassment followed by the national level athletes and then the exercisers. In this case, it is possible that as athletes and coaches, peer-athletes, and other sport-related men at the elite level of sport spend a considerable amount of time together, their relationship type moves again toward the private sphere and sexually harassing behaviors are exhibited. Moreover, according to Fasting et al. (2003) the boundaries for acceptable, proper behaviors are moved as athletes become socialized into the culture of elite sport, which is known for being very masculine and dominated by masculine values (Messner & Sabo, 1994). Due to the masculine dominance it is also possible that some male perpetrators do not consider this kind of sexually harassing behavior offensive despite the fact it is unwanted by the women.

The prevalence of sexual harassment among Greek athletes reported in this article shares some common trends with both the experiences of the Czech Republic female athletes and exercisers, and Norwegian female elite athletes (Fasting, et al., 2003, Fasting & Knorre, 2005) as all countries' athletes reported high amounts of sexual harassment experiences and harassment appears to be greater from men outside sport than men inside sport. The frequency of experiencing sexual

harassment behavior seems to be larger than in many other countries also when the different ways of measuring sexual harassment is taken into account. This may be due to the fact that both countries have newly introduced laws on sexual harassment (2006 and 2004, respectively) that may not have been yet acknowledged by the societies at large. In addition, these laws do not cover the domains of sports. With regard to gender equity laws, Greece has had one in place since 1984, yet according to Timmermann (2005) referring to a comparative study on gender equality work in the EU, conducted by Plantinga and Hansen (2001), pointed that Greece was one of the countries with the lowest scores on equal opportunity. In the Czech Republic there is no specific gender equity law, some references to gender equality appear in the Constitution and the Labor Code (Gender Equality in Czech Republic, 2009). As Moshonas (1993) stated, although the society of Greece has progressed towards modernization in recent decades, it appears to be late compared to other societies. Hence, for different reasons, both countries appear to progress slowly toward gender equality, which may impact the prevalence of sexual harassment in both countries.

Practical Issues and Suggestions

The present research results documented the need for preventive work on sexual harassment in Greek sport. Since 2003, paragraph 40 of the European Parliament Resolution on Women and Sport "Urges Member States and Sport Federations to adopt measures for the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment and abuse in sport by enforc-

ing the legislation on sexual harassment at work, to inform athletes and their parents of the risk of abuse and the means of legal action available to them, to provide sports organizations' staff with specific training and to ensure that criminal and disciplinary provisions are applied" (§ 40, INI/2002/2280). More recently, the IOC Medical Commission produced the Consensus Statement on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in sport (IOC, 2007), presented earlier in this paper, that advocates several practical steps to improve athlete safety.

The Hellenic General Secretariat of Sport, the Hellenic Olympic Committee and the Sport Federations ought to take this issue seriously. Following the IOC and EU recommendations, they ought to develop: (a) policies against sexual harassment that will promote safer sport environments, and (b) educational and training programs on sexual harassment for athletes, coaches, and administrators. Furthermore, a Code of Conduct for coaches ought to be developed in order to clarify potential grey areas of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and to set the boundaries that may ensure sport participants' wellbeing. Through anti-harassment laws, policies, and regulations some countries and institutions have succeed in diminishing the amount of sexual harassment experienced by women; yet the problem appears to be more complicated. More research on sexual harassment is necessary. Investigating the individuals' attitudes and intentions toward sexual harassment may produce important knowledge to subsequently facilitate behavior modification.

Significance for the Quality of Life

While sexual harassment seriously impacts the individual in numerous ways (socially, psychologically, physically, and professionally); it also impairs the trust between individuals. Especially when the harasser is in a superior position, the victim's life and professional development may be seriously impacted. It is important to keep in mind that some victimized female athletes failed in forgetting the actual experience of being sexual harassed, whereas others had to drop out of their sport (Fasting, Brackenridge, & Walseth, 2002). It is essential to prevent these incidents for girls and women. It is the interpersonal relationships within the world of sport that impact the participants' quality of experience in sport. Clear-cut relationships reveal respect for all parts involved in the relationship and increase the potential for a fruitful and successful relationship, which in the world of sport oftentimes signifies improvement in performance and/or results. Moreover, the sense of safety within the sport environment that contributes immensely toward gaining maximum benefits from sport participation at all levels and for both genders. Last but not least, respectful, trusting relationships enhance opportunities of participation and achievement for girls and women in sports which consequently enrich the quality of their lives as well as the society they live in.

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