

Process Assessment of Fencer's Parents within the scope of the Covid-19 Normalization Steps

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to measure and construe the opinions of the parents of athletes who are actively participating in competitions in our country and who are licensed by the Turkish Fencing Federation for the 2019-2020 season, regarding the organizations to be planned and the issues to be paid attention, within the scope of the Covid-19 normalization steps. The study group comprises 410 parents in total who take place on the list of licensed athlete parents of the Turkish Fencing Federation in 2019-2020. An online data collection form was used as a data collection tool in this study, which was structured through the qualitative research method. The survey form, which was drawn up by the researcher by taking expert opinion, consisting of a total of nine questions, and devised to learn the opinions of the participants on the subject matter of the study, includes multiple-choice and open-ended question types. In this study conducted in collaboration with the Turkish Fencing Federation, the respondents answered the questionnaire online via the website of the respective federation and took part in the study voluntarily. Consent regarding the study was presented in the "Remarks" section of the form to the participants for approval. In the analysis process of the data obtained, the data analysis program called MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2018 (Release 18.2.4) (Professional Data Analysis Software for Qualitative and Mixed Methods) was used. While closed-ended questions were summarized by indicating percentages, the content analysis method was used in the process of analyzing open-ended question and answer reports. The data obtained were visualized with the help of frequency tables and code maps. Finally, some of the opinions of the participants, which were coded, were directly conveyed by interpreting the findings obtained through the tables and code maps. For this study, an approval was received from the Ethics Committee for Non-Invasive Clinical Research of the School of Sport Sciences of Selcuk University. It was determined as a result of the study that the Covid-19 pandemic that poses impacts on the entire world affects the attitudes of parents of athletes to participate in organizations. In the activities planned to be organized, the sub-codes like attending without an audience, open-air competitions, provision of spaciousness and ventilation means in the selection of a competition hall, and risk approval notification are classified. In addition, arrangements for the priorities of the parents of athletes in the organizations to be held within the scope of the Covid-19 normalization steps of the respective federation were ensured by presenting the Turkish Fencing Federation with the report drawn up as a result of the study.

Keywords: Covid-19, Fencing, Fencer's Parents

Covid-19 Normalleşme Adımları Kapsamında Eskrimci Ebeveynlerinin Süreç Değerlendirmesi

Özet

Bu araştırmanın amacı, ülkemizde faal olarak yarışmalara katılan ve Türkiye Eskrim Federasyonu 2019-2020 yılı sezonu vizeli sporcu ebeveynlerinin Covid-19 normalleşme adımları kapsamında, planlaması yapılacak olan organizasyonlar ve dikkat edilecek hususlarda görüşlerini ölçmek ve yorumlamaktır. Araştırma grubunu; 2019-2020 yılında Türkiye Eskrim Federasyonu vizeli sporcu ebeveynleri arasında yer alan 410 ebeveyn oluşturmaktadır. Nitel araştırma metoduyla kurgulanan bu araştırmada; veri toplama aracı olarak online veri toplama formu kullanılmıştır. Araştırmacı tarafından uzman görüşü alınarak hazırlanmış, toplam 9 sorudan oluşan ve katılımcıların, araştırma amacına yönelik görüşlerini öğrenmek amacıyla kurgulanan soru formu çoktan seçmeli ve açık uçlu soru tiplerini içermektedir. Türkiye Eskrim Federasyonu ile ortak hareket edilerek gerçekleştirilen bu çalışmada, katılımcılar ilgili federasyonun web sitesi aracılığıyla online ortamda soru formunu cevaplamış olup, çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmışlardır. Araştırma ile ilgili onam, formun açıklama kısmında katılımcıların onayına sunulmuştur. Elde edilen verilerin analiz sürecinde ise MAXQDA Analyctis Pro 2018 (Release 18.2.4) (Nitel ve Karma Yöntemler için Profesyonel Veri Analiz Yazılımı) isimli veri analiz programı kullanılmıştır. Kapalı uçlu sorular yüzde verilerek özetlenirken, açık uçlu soru cevap raporlarını analiz etme sürecinde içerik analizi metodu kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler, frekans tabloları ve kod haritaları yardımıyla görselleştirilmiştir. Nihai olarak tablo ve kod haritaları ile elde edilen bulgular yorumlanarak, katılımcıların kodlama yapılan bazı görüşleri doğrudan aktarılmıştır. Bu araştırma için Selçuk Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi Girişimsel Olmayan Klinik Araştırmalar Etik Kurulundan onay alınmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda; Tüm dünyayı etkileyen Covid-19 salgınının sporcu ebeveynlerinin organizasyonlara katılım tutumlarını etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Düzenlenmesi planlanan faaliyetlerde; seyircisiz katılım, açık hava müsabakaları, Müsabaka Salon Seçiminde genişlik ve havalandırma olanaklarının sağlanması, risk onay bildirimini gibi alt kodlar tasnif edilmiştir. Ayrıca çalışma sonucunda hazırlanan rapor; Türkiye Eskrim Federasyonuna sunulacak, ilgili federasyonun Covid-19 normalleşme adımları kapsamında düzenleyeceği organizasyonlarda sporcu velilerinin önceliklerine yönelik düzenleme yapılmasına olanak sağlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19, Eskrim, Sporcu Velileri

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, with the effects of changing user demands and digital transformation; has been one of the major challenges facing sports organizations. The COVID-19 epidemic, which has deeply affected the whole world in recent years and brought serious problems with the death of thousands of people, is a global epidemic that is still being studied on. Many athletes and sports personnel are also affected by the various effects of this epidemic (2). COVID-19 is a deadly type of corona virus that affects the whole world, especially in 2020, with a risk of transmission through droplets.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments and administrations have taken strict measures to contain the rapid spread of the disease. Unprecedented steps were taken, including quarantines, banning all organized and social gatherings (including sporting events), and restricting all non-essential travels (8). Participating in sports and exercises, which has indispensable significance for health, especially with the epidemic; started to be discussed with the pandemic. Many league and sports events were suspended. The 2020 Olympic games have been postponed due to the pandemic (10). In order to reduce the risk of transmission with the measures taken by national governments, sports activities, especially in indoor sports halls, were suspended for a long period (7).

There is limited data available to determine especially when it is safe to return to sports, after the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the prolonged interruption caused by COVID-19 makes it difficult to discern best practices for a safe return to sport. There is a clear need to develop and adopt consistent measures for the resumption of sporting activities, including training and competition, that prioritize the health and well-being of athletes while protecting coaches, ancillary staff and audience (5). According to Nauright et al. (6), The suggestion that the sports world known in 2019 will not be the same as the world of sports that took place or is taking place in 2022, and that new sports forms will emerge, has been revealed by many studies.

In different sports categories, according to the specific characteristics of the relevant category, Measures have been taken to start activities after the COVID-19 pandemic. Many measures such as holding matches without audience in branches that appeal to large groups of fans, screening athletes and other officials for COVID-19 before the competition

in professional leagues (testing, symptom observation, etc.), holding some amateur sports matches with limited participants of a regional nature can be counted in this way. Especially many scientists and sports experts working on health have expressed their opinions about returning to sports after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the perspectives of parents, who are the focus of decision, on sports after the pandemic, especially in the participation of children under the age of 18 in these activities, are of vital importance for children. In this study, it was planned to reveal the point of view of a different group, especially on the precautions to be taken before the activities planned to be carried out in the fencing branch. Within the scope of the study, it has been tried to compile the measures that the parents of the fencers want to be taken in the post-pandemic fencing matches.

The purpose of this research is to measure and interpret the opinions of the parents of athletes who actively participate in competitions in our country and who are licensed by the Turkish Fencing Federation 2020, on the organizations to be planned and the issues to be considered within the scope of the COVID-19 normalization steps.

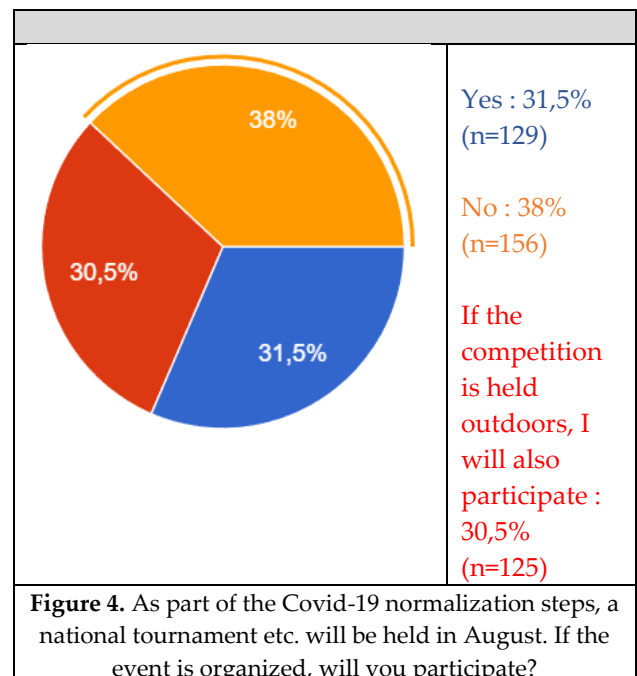
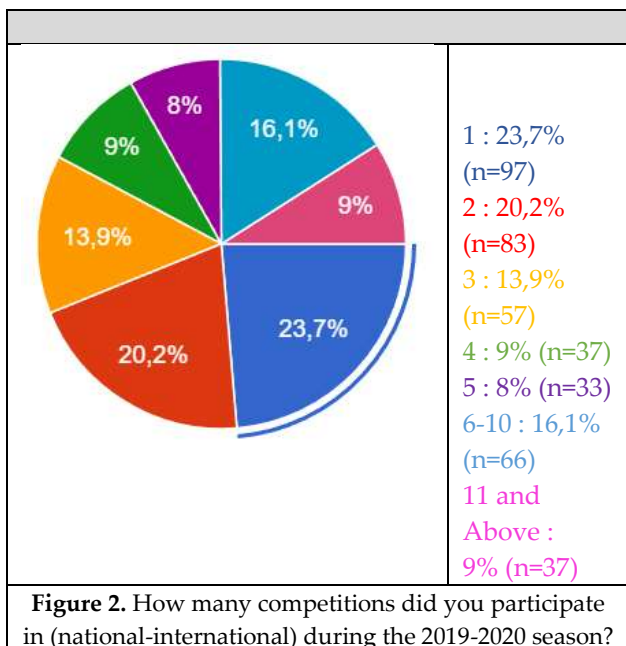
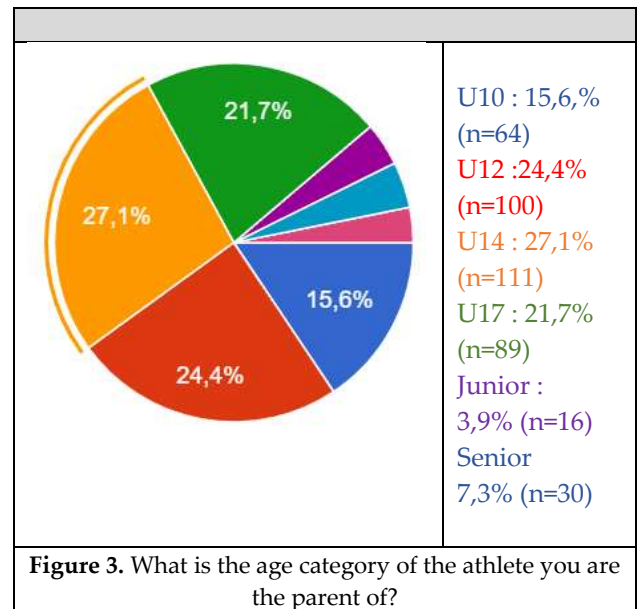
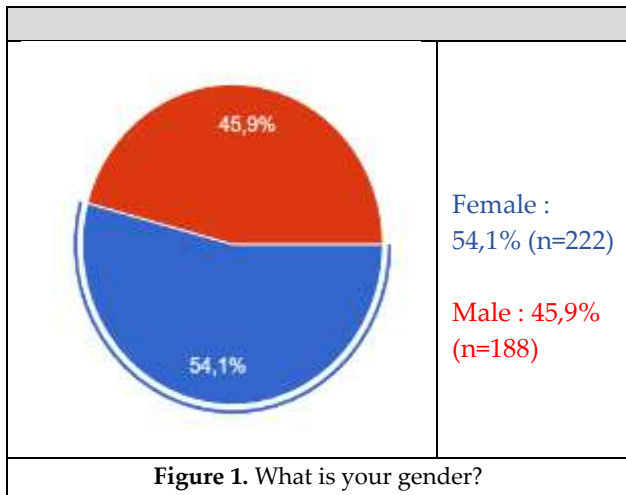
METHOD

The research group is consisting of 410 athletes' parents who participated in the competitions organized by the Turkish Fencing Federation in 2020. In this research, which was designed with the qualitative research method; An online data collection form was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire, which was prepared by the researcher by taking expert opinion, consisting of a total of 5 questions and designed to learn the opinions of the participants on the purpose of the research, includes multiple choice and open-ended question types. In this study, which was carried out in cooperation with the Turkish Fencing Federation, the participants answered the questionnaire online through the website of the relevant federation and participated in the study voluntarily. Consent about the research was submitted to the approval of the participants in the explanation part of the form.

In the analysis process of the obtained data, the data analysis program named MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2018 (Release 18.2.4) (Professional Data Analysis Software for Qualitative and Mixed Methods) was used. While closed-ended questions were summarized by giving percentages, content analysis method was used in the process of analyzing open-

ended question and answer reports. The obtained data were visualized with the help of frequency tables and code maps. Approval for this study was obtained from the Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Sport Sciences, Selcuk University.

FINDINGS



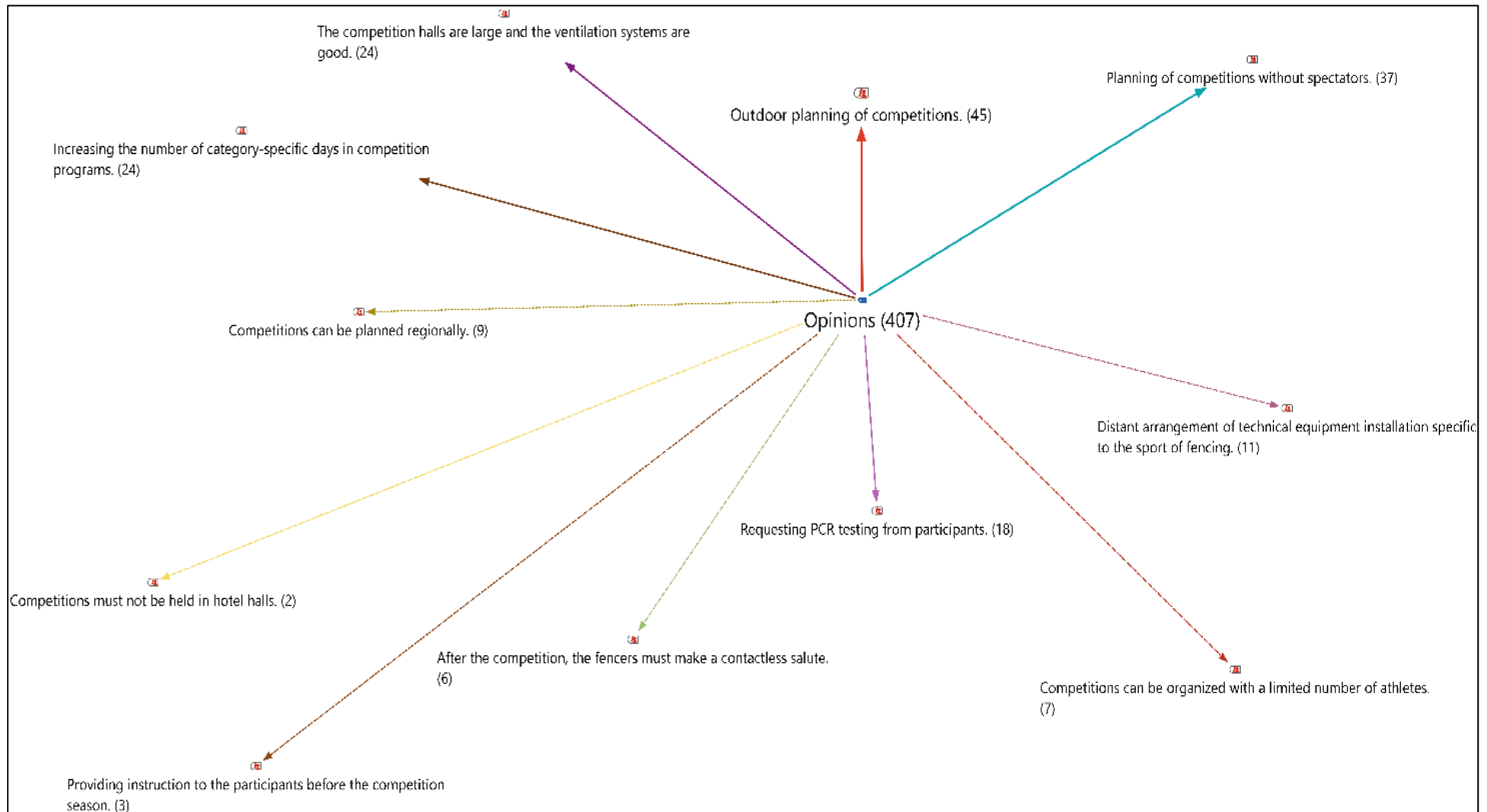


Figure 5. What are your suggestions about the measures in case of starting activities within the scope of Covid-19 normalization steps?

Within the scope of the research, 410 mothers and fathers were reached, and it was determined that the majority of the participants were female participants with a ratio of 54,1% (n=222). The categories of the athletes, of which more than half of the participants are parents, were observed as U10-U12 and U14 age categories. One of the research questions is on the determination of how many competitions the athletes participated in the 2019-2020 season, and 56,1% of the athletes to whom the participants were related participated in 3 or more competitions in the said season. As of the year the research was conducted, 38% (n=156) of the participants stated that they would not participate in the competitions, while 31,5% (n=129) stated that they would participate in the planning and realization of activities in August 2020. In the event that the competitions in the sub-answers of this question are planned in an outdoor environment, 125 people marked the conditional choice of participation in the activities with a ratio of 30,5% (n=125).

The open-ended question of the research; *“What are your suggestions about the measures to be taken in case of starting activities within the scope of Covid-19 normalization steps?”* was answered by 407 participants. The answers given by the participants in writing were classified by the content analysis method with the help of codes and sub-codes. While coding, the use of masks, attention to hygiene, frequent hand washing and social distance-themed measures recommended by the World Health Organization and almost all health authorities to protect against viruses and epidemics were ignored (9). It was determined that many of the participants expressed their opinions on these issues first, and they were not coded as sub-codes because the said measures are of vital importance not only in sports events, but also in daily life, and because they are measures with high awareness by everyone. The Turkish Fencing Federation announced a scheme including the aforementioned measures to all its stakeholders in the form of an infographic during the epidemic.

186 statements were coded under 11 different sub-codes about the measures to be taken in case of starting activities within the scope of Covid-19 normalization steps. The distribution of the expressions in question is explained in detail in the code map available in figure 5. The suggestions of the participants about the precautions were shaped under 11 different codes;

- 1- To plan the competitions outdoor.
- 2-To plan competitions without spectators.
- 3-The competition halls should be large and the air conditioning systems should be in good condition.
- 4- To increase the number of category-based days in the competition programs.
- 5-To demand PCR testing from participants.
- 6-Distant arrangement of technical equipment installation specific for the sport of fencing.
- 7-Competitions should be planned regionally.
- 8-Competitions should be organized with a limited number of athletes.
- 9-After the competition, fencers must salute distantly.
- 10- To instruct participants before the competition season.
- 11-Competitions must not be held in hotel halls.

Among the suggestions of the parents participating in the research, 4 issues with more than 100 statements in total attract attention. The first of these is the organization of the competition organizations to be planned outdoors, and the sample statements of some participants on the subject are as follows.

(“Participant 370: Training and tournaments are held outdoors as much as possible.”)

(“Participant 372: Organizing tournaments in open areas, as much as weather conditions permitting.”)

(“Participant 164: Covered and open areas can be preferred.”)

Some examples of the suggestions in the statements of the participants about the planned competitions to be held without audience are as follows.

(“Participant 408: Parents should not allowed into the competition hall.”)

(“Participant 84: Athletes, parents or coaches who do not have a job in the hall should wait outside.”)

("Participant 53: Parents or spectators should not be allowed into the area so that it is not too crowded.")

Parents who participated in the research focused on the hall and ventilation systems where fencing competitions will be held, another issue that they attach great importance to the precautions to be taken in case of starting the organizations and their views are exemplified as follows.

("Participant 333: I expect the ventilation systems of the tournaments to be held in accordance with the rules.")

("Participant 181: Continuous operation of air conditioners or open windows in order to have fresh air in the hall.")

("Participant 373: Selection of large and hygienic halls.")

One of the issues that the participants especially emphasized was that the competition programs should be spread over more days or time intervals, and sample expressions were as follows.

("Participant 300: Preventing the density of athletes by performing activities in different branches on different days.")

("Participant 170: By increasing the number of days, the number of athletes in the hall can be reduced.")

("Participant 24: Planning tournaments in one category, not all age groups and categories, will avoid crowds.")

In addition to the statements made by the parents participating in the research about the precautions and described with examples above; Suggestions were determined that the participants should be divided into regional groups, PCR tests should be requested from the participants, no greeting at the end of the competitions and small hotel halls should not be used.

RESULT

The emergence of COVID-19 has created significant difficulties in the conduct of sports competitions and mass events. With the mode of transmission of the disease and the possibility of adverse health consequences, it has become imperative above all to keep our athletes safe (1). The idea that an understanding based on keeping the

health of athletes safe should be adopted as a basis has been expressed in many academic studies. Ensuring the control of the health routines of the athletes by the sports physicians will play an important role in preventing the disease. In order to reduce the risk of infection, this precaution and follow-up system should be operated well (11).

It can be said that it is not a long-term sustainable situation for the fencing branch, whether outdoor organizations are possible or not, as stated by the majority of the research participants. In the study of Hedenburg et al. (3), it was emphasized that although outdoor sports activities sound logical at first, they cannot find enough space or if the participants become crowded, they will bring some problems. Likewise, the realization of sports events without audience will have a negative effect on professional sports branches, especially in economic terms (4).

Due to the nature of fencing, it can be said that it is possible to easily apply most of the generally accepted measures in order to reduce the risk of transmission of the disease, especially due to the lack of close contact. In this research, cooperation was made with the Turkish Fencing Federation within the scope of Covid-19 normalization steps, and the results of the research were presented to the authorities in a report. In the light of the report, the normalization steps for the branch were arranged with new and original rules.

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