Abstract

This study examined the relationship between medical service utilization and sports participation with a sample of 141 undergraduates (29 female athletes, 38 male athletes, 46 female non-athletes, and 28 male non-athletes). A model was constructed with health, psychological, and social factors to predict medical service utilization. Participants' levels of stress, gender role, hardiness, neuroticism, and social support were collected by a self-report questionnaire at the beginning of the study. A longitudinal research design was adopted to obtain the utilization records after three consecutive one-month periods. Athletes and non-athletes showed no difference on the their health status but non-athletes were significantly higher in the likelihood of using medical services in the three months afterward. Results of the logistic regression analysis revealed that poorer health status, a lower level of masculinity and a higher level of social support predicted a higher chance of medical utilization for all participants including both athletes and non-athletes. The same predictors were also found to be significant for non-athletes. However, only the number of illnesses before the study predicted utilization for athletes. These results imply that there are different focuses in promoting more medical service utilization for this population.