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## **Emotional intelligence among national and university level badminton players in Sri Lanka**

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**Background:** Badminton is a popular sport that needs both physical and mental abilities. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined as the ability to accurately perceive and express emotion. Identifying the patterns and associated factors of EI can improve the performance of badminton.

**Objective:** This study aimed to determine the patterns, and associated factors of EI among national and university level badminton players in Sri Lanka.

**Methods & Materials:** A cross-sectional descriptive study with a comparison group was conducted among national (Sri Lanka Badminton Association) and university (University of Colombo and University of Sabaragamuwa) level players. Four-dimension Wong and Law emotional intelligence scale was used to assess EI. A score was given from 16 to 112 for total EI and from 4-28 for each EI dimension (Self-emotional appraisal, Others' emotional appraisal, Regulation of emotion, Use of emotion). Descriptive statistics and independent sample T-test were used to analyze data.

**Results:** Out of 106 players 93 responded; 52.7% were male; 45 were national level. All players were aged between 17 to 26 years. The total EI in national level players was 94.33 ( $\pm 8.921$ ) and university players was 91.96 ( $\pm 10.345$ ) ( $p=0.240$ ). Male national players scored highest total EI ( $98.00 \pm 6.641$ ) and female university players scored the lowest ( $90.10 \pm 11.374$ ). Among different domains, national players scored higher in “Use of emotions” ( $p=0.001$ ) and university players scored higher in “Others’ emotional appraisal” ( $p=0.013$ ). In the total population, males scored significantly higher than females in total EI ( $p=0.020$ ); and “Regulation of emotion” ( $p=0.005$ ).

**Conclusion:** The total EI was similar in both the studied national and university level badminton players in Sri Lanka. The “Use of emotions” was higher in national level players whereas, “Others’ emotional appraisal” was higher in university players. Gender is a factor associated with total EI.