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**Stress and Well-being among Israeli Female Basketball Premier League players:**  
**Exploring weekly fluctuations**

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**Background:** Professional athletes are required to function in a competitive and demanding, and thus often stressful, environment. The harmful effects of stress on athletes' well-being has recently become a hot topic in the sport world, with basketball players coming forward and bravely sharing their battles with stress, anxiety and depression. Such stories have placed the exploration of the life stress and general well-being of athletes on the front stage of contemporary sport psychology research.

**Aim:** To investigate well-being and stress in the Israeli Female Basketball Premier League.

**Methods:** Professional basketball players from the Israeli Female Basketball Premier League (N=87), which represents 90% of the league's players, filled out a questionnaire package across three occasions over three consecutive weeks (T1,T2,T3) during the 2017-2018 season. Questionnaires included both general life variables (stress and subjective well-being) and sport-specific variables (engagement and performance).

**Results:** First, in order to estimate the within-person variability across the three time points, an Intra-Class Correlation (ICC) approach was used. Results indicated that the within-person variance ranged between 16% and 62%, indicating that the variables of interest do change across time. Second, to test the research hypotheses, a cross-lagged path model was run, in which each of the four research variables predicted the other three variables in the following week. The cross-lagged paths were tested while controlling for the outcomes from the previous time point, thus strengthening causality. As expected, cross-lagged paths were found between stress and performance such that stress in T1 and T2 negatively predicted performance in T2 and T3, respectively; however, the reverse paths were not significant.

**Discussion:** The fluctuation of the life stress level between weeks indicates the dynamic and demanding nature of the competitive sport environment in which female basketball players are required to perform. The negative cross-lagged effects found between life stress and athletic performance emphasize the continuous negative impact of life stress from one week to another, as well as the interchange between athletes' mental status and their performance.