

## **The Relative Age Effect (RAE) in Youth and Professional Soccer Players in Turkey**

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**ABSTRACT** The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of Relative Age Effect (RAE) on the top league of professional soccer teams and their all competitor categories of youth teams in Turkey. Relative age effects refer to age differences in the same selection year. We compared categories in the birth-month distributions of professional and young soccer players (N=2939) in the teams (18 clubs) of the Turkish Super League (TSL). The Chi-square statistic test showed an over-representation of players born in the first month (January) and first quarter (January to March) in all categories. The RAE was a major factor in the selection of elite soccer players in Turkey. As a result, the selection is not suitable, and talented youth soccer players lose their chances. By aid of similar pre-studies focused on RAE, a current study suggested that competitor player age grades should revive for youths in the maturation phases.