

Sexual Activity And Condom Use In Female Collegiate Athletes Versus Non-athletes

Watson A, Martin M, Hunt H: University of South Carolina - Columbia, Columbia, SC

As research indicates, traditional-age college students are at a higher risk to contract a sexually transmitted disease. The objective of this study is to compare the sexual behavior and incidence of sexually transmitted diseases among collegiate female athletes versus their non-athlete peers. A 24 question survey was given to 100 female division I collegiate athletes and 100 non-athletes randomly selected, for convenience, from a Psychology, Biomechanics, and Human Movement class at the same university. Participation in this study was stressed as completely voluntary and all answers strictly confidential. The questionnaire contained questions regarding sexual behavior and knowledge of safe sex practices along with demographic information, such as the primary sport of participation, age, race, and year in school. After collecting all 200 surveys, the answers from each group were tallied and compared with sexual activity, condom use or some other safe sex practice, and the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases being the focus of the results. From the questionnaire, the number of lifetime partners and the age of the first sexual encounter as compared between athletes and non-athletes was similar; however, the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases were not as similar. The athletic population experienced twice the rate of sexually transmitted diseases as their non-athletic peers. Both groups reported condom use 44% of the time and over 70% have had more than one partner. In spite of the assumed intellectual level of these subjects, over 43% of both groups had engaged in sexual activity with someone other than a steady partner. Findings of this study have implications for improved methods of STD/AIDS education. Sexually transmitted diseases/Acquired Immunodeficiency Disease Syndrome education workshops should be included annually in each sport's pre-season, focusing on both social and physical aspects of safer sex practices.

Attitudes About Football Helmet Removal Procedures From Students In A Paramedic Education Classroom

Vieson M, Wimer JW: Wilmington College, Wilmington, OH

Support for leaving the football helmet in place until cervical-spine fracture or dislocation are ruled out has been extensively documented. The purpose of our study was to investigate the attitudes of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) preparing for paramedic certification. We wanted to know whether EMTs (paramedic students) are knowledgeable about leaving the helmet in place in cases of suspected cervical injury. A survey was administered to 81 students enrolled in a community college paramedic program. The instrument consisted of a scenario portraying a downed football player with a possible cervical-spine injury and six statements regarding management and care for the athlete in the scenario. Responses to each question were made on a modified Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 7 =strongly disagree). We hypothesized that the paramedic students would be knowledgeable about football helmet procedures for two reasons. First, we believed that the paramedic students would be more familiar about the topic of football helmet removal in cases of cervical-spine injury than entry-level EMTs due to training seminars and experience. Second, we believed that persistent educational efforts by groups such as NATA, ACSM and NCAA have influenced paramedic instruction. In other words, we thought the paramedic curriculum would reflect the views of most certified athletic trainers (ATCs) — that the football helmet should remain in place in cases of suspected cervical spine injury. Results of the survey showed that paramedic students were somewhat knowledgeable about football helmet procedures. Specifically, we found a marginally significant difference between the EMTs attained educational level and their knowledge about football helmet removal. Results from an independent samples t-test ($p = 0.07$) indicate that EMT-A (advanced level) agreed that it was important to leave the football helmet on (4.80 ± 2.07), whereas EMT-B (basic level) thought it was less important to leave the helmet in place (3.75 ± 2.01). Despite these data, continuing efforts are necessary to educate EMTs and paramedics that football helmet removal requires specialized training because of problems posed by adjoining athletic equipment, primarily the shoulder pads.

Collegiate Coaches' Knowledge Of Eating Disorders

Turk JC, Prentice WE: The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Exploratory research was conducted to assess collegiate coaches' knowledge of eating disorders. In addition to investigating knowledge, confidence in response correctness was analyzed as well as demographic data. Knowledge of eating disorders was computed overall and within five domains. These domains include: etiology; identifying signs and symptoms; management and treatment; risk factors; and education and prevention of eating disorders. One-hundred thirty-eight NCAA Division I-A coaches from five universities responded to the two-part questionnaire. Demographic data focused on educational programs attended by coaches and teams. The survey consisted of 30 true / false questions which tested knowledge in each of the five domains. Coaches indicated their level of certainty in their response by rating their confidence level on a four item Likert-type scale. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze all data. Results suggested a need for coaches to achieve a greater knowledge of eating disorders in all domains. Evidence showed that educational programs about eating disorders were not often sponsored by the athletic department for coaches or athletes. There seemed to be poor communication between athletic departments and coaches regarding the availability of eating disorder educational resources. Data suggested coaches could benefit from comprehensive education in all domains of eating disorders. Athletic departments are in a position to enforce such education of coaches, teams, and other department members that work closely with athletes. With proper education, athletic departments and coaches can play a primary role in enhancing the health and athletic experience of athletes.