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Factors of Persistence: How Minority Athletic Training Students Compare to Nonminority Students

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CONTEXT

In order to create more equitable access to and quality of healthcare to patients served by athletic trainers, athletic trainers should be representative of those whom they are treating. Racial and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the profession of athletic training.

OBJECTIVE

To help address the low numbers of minority athletic trainers, this study examined athletic training education with the specific aim of identifying factors associated with academic persistence (anticipatory factors, academic integration, social integration, clinical integration, and motivation) for minority and nonminority athletic training students.

DESIGN

Cross-sectional.

SETTING

On-line survey.

PARTICIPANTS

Students enrolled in professional athletic training programs in the United States.

INTERVENTION

Program directors were emailed a link to the survey and asked to forward the link on to their students. Students then completed a modified version of the Athletic Training Education Program Student Retention Questionnaire (ATEPSRQ) and answered various demographic questions. The

ATEPSRQ consists of five subscales: anticipatory factor, academic integration, social integration, clinical integration, and motivation. 577 students, about 4% of the student population (73.1% women and 26.9% men; age 21.25 ± 2.68), completed the survey. Race of the participants were 81.5% White, 6.2% Black, 4.7% Hispanic, 2.3% Asian, 0.2% Alaskan Native/Native American, 4.3% Multiracial, 0.9% Other.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES

Using MANCOVAs, these academic factors were compared across number of semesters completed, program type (bachelor or entry level master's), and minority (non-White) versus nonminority (White) status. Covariates were age, gender, athletic training program admission GPA, and whether students received a Pell grant.

RESULTS

No significant difference between minority students and non-minority students on the ATEPSRQ ($F_{(5,563)}=.439$, $p=.821$; Wilks' $\Lambda=.996$; partial $\eta^2=.004$). No significant difference between minority students and non-minority students and semesters completed in an athletic training program ($F_{(5,559)}=.813$, $p=.541$; Wilks' $\Lambda=.993$; partial $\eta^2=.007$). No significant difference between students in graduate professional athletic training programs and undergraduate professional athletic training programs ($F_{(5,561)}=1.381$, $p=.230$; Wilks' $\Lambda=.988$; partial $\eta^2=.012$).

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CONCLUSIONS

Minority and nonminority students did not score differently on the ATEPSRQ meaning that at the time students completed the survey, minority and nonminority students were reporting the same experiences known to affect persistence. This is a positive result and may suggest an overall positive trend in athletic training education. The results may suggest that the lack of minority representation in athletic training may be because of factors before or after athletic training education.

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