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The “Mentorship Competency Assessment of Research Mentors” Applied to the Perceived Effectiveness of Athletic Training Clinical Preceptors

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OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this research was to explore which sex (male or female) of preceptor was perceived to be more effective mentors by professional athletic training students.

DESIGN

Exploratory Design, Web-Based Survey

SETTING

A CAATE Accredited athletic training education program within Division I athletics.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 24 3rd and 4th year athletic training students participated.

INTERVENTION

A modified Mentoring Competency Assessment (MCA, 2009) was adopted and administered to student participants via Qualtrics. Participants were asked 27 questions related to the MCA with six subscales; Effective Communication, Aligning Expectations, Assessing Understanding, Addressing Diversity, Fostering Independence, and Promoting Professional Development in which they rated preceptors mentoring competency. The MCA utilized a 5-point Likert Scale where 5 = Exceptional Level of Competence and 1 = Not Competent At All.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

Using measures of central tendency and an Independent Samples *t*-Test male and female preceptor scores on each subscale and overall score on the MCA were analyzed.

RESULTS Among the 24 student participants 18 (75%) were female and 7 (25%) were male. Preceptor sex was 10 (42%) males and 14 (58%) females. Male preceptors generated an overall mean score of 4.04 (± 0.65), while female preceptors generated an overall mean score of 2.60 (± 1.03). Male and female scores are displayed more comprehensively in Table 1. Independent Samples *t*-Test results indicated that males are perceived to be more competent preceptors than females on all six subscales associated with the MCA using a *p*-value of .01. The most significant result came from Effective Communication; $t(22) = 4.67, p = <.001$.

Variable	Male		Female	
	M	SD	M	SD
Effective Communication	4.38	.47	2.94	1.04
Aligning Expectations	4.18	.77	2.75	1.02
Assessing Understanding	4.18	.77	2.75	1.02
Addressing Diversity	3.86	.92	2.30	1.01
Fostering Independence	4.15	.78	2.76	1.19
Promoting Prof Dev.	3.71	.77	2.33	1.16
Overall	4.04	.65	2.60	1.03

CONCLUSIONS The results of the study indicate that in this particular sample male preceptors were perceived to be more effective than females. Further research is needed to determine specific traits and behaviors of preceptors to create effective mentors. Additionally, research should be conducted using a larger and more distributed sample.

REFERENCES

1. Fleming L, House S, Rubio DM. The Mentoring Competency Assessment: Validation of a new instrument to evaluate skills of research mentors. *Acad Med.* 2013;88(7):1002-1008.

KEY WORDS: *preceptor, mentor effectiveness, Mentor Competency Assessment*