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Mens' and Womens' Division III Soccer Athletes Anxiety Levels Due to Balancing Academic and Team Responsibilities

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OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study was to investigate anxiety levels due to balancing academic and team responsibilities in one Division III womens' and mens' soccer teams.

DESIGN and SETTING

Descriptive survey research. A paper survey was distributed. Independent variables were the Division III men's/women's' soccer athletes (starters/non-starters, grade levels). The dependent variable was anxiety levels of the mens' and womens' student athletes.

PARTICIPANTS

Convenience sample of 54 soccer athletes (N=54) 100% return rate. 44% (n=24) were women's soccer, 54% (n=30) were men's soccer, one survey was not used. 30% (n=16) freshman, 15% (n=8) sophomores, 24% (n=13) juniors, 28% (n=15) seniors, 2% (n=1) 5th year. 50% (n=27) starters, 48%(n=26) non-starters.

INTERVENTION

20 question survey. Face validity and content validity was established. IRB was obtained. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages), Pearson Chi Square Test (grouping variable: gender and starters/non-starters), Kruskal Wallis Tests (grouping variable: grade level) were used. Alpha level set at $p=.05$ *a priori*.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURE

5-point,6-point Likert scale.

RESULTS

19% (n=10) of athletes "strongly disagreed", 33% (n=18) "disagree" they had feeling nervousness, panic, breathing rapidly,

increased heart rate, difficulty controlling worry when participating in team responsibilities. 43% (n=23) "agree", 24% (n=13) "disagree" "had anxiety symptoms during stressful week of exams, assignments, balancing going to games, practices" 30% (n=16) "disagree," 41% (n=22) "agree," have had anxiety symptoms increase on game 39% (n=21) of the student athletes agreed with the statement, 17% (n=9) of the student athletes strongly agree ($x^2= 18.855$, $df=4$, $p= <.001$) "I have had anxiety symptoms increase during a busy week of exams and assignments that need to be done." 28% (n=15) of the student athletes agree with this statement, 7% (n=4) of the student athletes strongly agree ($x^2= 16.004$, $df=4$ $p=.003$) "I had the feeling of nervousness, panic, rapid breathing, increased heart rate, difficulty controlling worrying, trouble sleeping, being tired or weak, or gastrointestinal issues while completing my academic responsibilities." 43% (n=23) "agreed" 15% (n=8) "strongly agreed" ($x^2= 13.980$, $df=4$, $p=.007$) "I have had anxiety symptoms during a stressful week of exams, assignments and also balancing going to games and practices." 4% (n=2) "strongly disagreed" 11% (n=6) starters "disagreed" ($x^2= 25.246$, $df=4$, $p= <.001$) in male student athletes "As a starter I have had an increase of anxiety symptoms included on game day." 9% (n=5) of the non-starters "agreed" 6% (n=3) of non-starters strongly agreed ($x^2=20.260$, $df=4$, $p= <.001$). "As a non-starter I have had anxiety symptoms increase when the coach tells me to get warmed up to go into the game." 38% (n=3) of the sophomores "agreed", 13% (n=1) of sophomores "strongly agreed" ($H= 12.445$, $df=4$, $p=.014$) in grade levels "As a starter I have had anxiety symptoms on game day."

CONCLUSION

Results show that athletes in this study had experienced a variety of anxiety symptoms balancing athletic and academic life during college. Male athletes may have more of a problem admitting to having symptoms than women. More education and support for

athletes on balancing academic and athletic life can give a better quality of life to athletes. Athletic Trainers should be cognizant of these life stresses for athletes and offer guidance and counseling as needed.

KEY WORDS: *Anxiety, Team Responsibilities, Academic Responsibilities, Starters/Non-Starters.*