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Athletic Trainers Knowledge and Practices for Sudden Cardiac Death

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OBJECTIVE

Sudden cardiac death (SCD) is one of the leading causes of death in athletics, despite athletic trainers working as first responders for athletic events. The purpose of this study was to assess athletic trainers' knowledge of SCD, and to analyze perceptions regarding evidence-based practice. This study aimed to answer how the NATA position statement has impacted athletic trainers practice, and to identify potential limitations in implementing best practice.

SETTING AND DESIGN

Mixed methods, cross sectional survey consisting of 38 questions.

PARTICIPANTS

This study utilized the NATA survey service for participant recruitment, as well as convenience sampling through professional connections of the research team. Certified athletic trainers who were currently practicing were targeted for the study. The study was sent to over 1,000 athletic trainers. Ninety-one athletic trainers replied to this survey. Fifty-nine participants met inclusion criteria.

INTERVENTION

Participants completed an electronic survey consisting of demographic, Likert style, and open-ended questions that assessed perception level of their knowledge of SCD, and ability to prevent SCD. The participant also answered a portion of the survey that assessed the knowledge of SCD, with research directly based off the NATA position statement on preventing sudden death. The survey was developed by the research team. Validity of the survey was assessed through a pilot study.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES

The primary research question was assessed by analyzing the score of the eleven quantitative questions at the end of the survey. Participants were graded on these questions to give a score on their knowledge of the NATA position statement. Descriptive statistics were used to assess the participants perceptions on SCD, the NATA position statement as well as limitations and facilitators in implementing best practices.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

There were 59 respondents that were included in this study, of the 91 total participants responded. Most of the participants were from the collegiate setting. Most participants have been certified and practiced for longer than 10 years. Most respondents had also reached an educational doctorate as their highest level of education. The study suggested that there was no direct effect of years certified on knowledge assessment scores. Current setting, and education levels both had no significant effect on knowledge assessment scores. It is worth noting that ATs with their highest level of education of a bachelors scored the highest on the knowledge assessment with an average of 80.71 ± 8.96 . There was a significant correlation between perceived usefulness of the NATA position statement, and knowledge assessment scores. Frequency of review did not show significant correlation to knowledge assessment scores. Through thematic analysis, lack of trained personnel, lack of communication, distance from AED, and lack of equipment were identified as barriers in implementing best practices.

KEY WORDS: Sudden Cardiac Death, Athletic Trainers, Evidence-Based Medicine

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