

## Athletic Training Students in the College/University Setting Are Acting Outside the Scope of Clinical Education

**Objectives:** To assess athletic training students (ATS) perceptions of the type and amount of clinical supervision received during clinical education, and determine the extent to which ATS are utilized beyond the scope of clinical education.

**Design and Setting:** A survey was conducted using an institutional demographic questionnaire and a primary survey instrument, adapted from similar research.

**Subjects:** Subjects consisted of a national stratified random sample (by NATA District) of undergraduate ATS from CAAHEP-accredited Athletic Training Education Programs, which represented NCAA Division I (n=21), II (n=15), and III (n=25) institutions. A total of 853 ATS participated in the study and consisted of 197 sophomores (23.1%), 310 juniors (36.4%), and 344 seniors (40.4%)

**Measurements:** Descriptive statistics were computed. Three sets of Chi-square analyses were completed to assess for associations among ATS with first-responder qualifications, certified athletic trainer medical coverage of moderate and increased risk sports, program/institutional characteristics, and type and amount of clinical supervision. This sentence and the one in Statistical Analysis need to be more of the same. A trend analysis of student's academic level and mean percentage of time spent in different types of clinical supervision was also completed. The alpha level was set at  $\leq .05$ .

**Results:** 276 (32.0%) of the students reported they provided health care and athletic training related coverage (e.g., therapeutic modalities and exercise) beyond that of a first responder; 85 (30.8%) of these students indicated these services were administered without appropriate supervision at least 60.0% of the time. Two hundred thirty-three (27.0%) of the ATS indicated they provided unsupervised athletic training room coverage. Three hundred and forty-two (39.7%) of the ATS reported that they traveled with teams without supervision, of which 132 students (38.6%) reported that they did so at least 60% of the time. There was a significant association between the higher number of athletes at an institution and the ability of a certified staff member to respond within four minutes when an injury occurred in a moderate/increased risk sport ( $\chi^2=7.804$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=.020$ ). The same holds true for institutions that have football compared to those that did not ( $\chi^2=6.353$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.028$ ). The amount of direct supervision of clinical experiences among undergraduate ATS indicated a decreasing percentage of time in direct supervision as the student's academic grade increased from sophomore (89.6%) to senior (85.3%), with a significant difference ( $f_{(3,833)}=3.867$ ,  $p=.009$ ) in the amount of supervision between sophomore and senior students.

**Conclusion:** Athletic training students do not seem to be receiving appropriate clinical supervision and are often acting outside the scope of clinical education. Less supervision of ATS may foster independence, but inadequately protects the athlete/patient in instances when a certified athletic trainer cannot intervene on their behalf.

**Key Words:** clinical education, student supervision, direct supervision, field experience, clinical experience