



High School Athletes' Perceptions of Their Sport Team Climate and Their Willingness to Report Concussion Symptoms

Presenters:

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Abstract:

In recent years there has been an increased concern over the frequency and effects of concussions on athletes. Researchers in sport psychology have utilized achievement goal perspective theory and a caring framework to identify physical and psychological wellbeing benefits of athletes perceiving a caring/task-involving climate within their teams. These frameworks may be beneficial to sport concussion preventative strategies. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of athletes' perceptions of the climate to their ability to overcome barriers to reporting concussion symptoms and willingness to report these. The relationship between the athletes' perceptions of the climate and their perceptions of the extent that they are concerned about their own health, and perceive that their coaches and teammates are concerned about their health was also considered. Female high school athletes (N= 168, 15-18 years old) participating in a competitive soccer league volunteered to complete a survey that included the measures described above. A canonical correlation analysis [$L = .58$, $F(18) = 5.23$ ($p < .001$); $C_{corr} = .54$, 30% overlapping variance] revealed that perceptions of a highly caring and task-involving, low ego-involving climate were positively and significantly associated with athletes indicating they would report concussion symptoms in a regular but not big game, and that they could overcome barriers to telling their coach about concussion symptoms. They also reported a strong sense that their coaches and teammates cared about their health. They also reported caring about their own health. Results of this study suggest that athletes may benefit from being in a caring/ task-involving team climate where the emphasis is on giving maximum effort, gauging their improvement, and where all involved are treated with mutual kindness and respect. Such a climate may help athletes engage in healthy sport competition that does not put their long-term health at risk.