



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

Presenters:

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Abstract:

Athletes' perceptions of a caring/task-involving climate on their teams have been associated with their reporting greater psychological wellbeing (Fry, et al., 2012). Concussions can cause serious short and long-term health affects, so it is important that athletes know the symptoms of a concussion and are willing to report their symptoms to their coach. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between adolescent athletes' perceptions of the climate on their sport teams to their willingness to report concussion symptoms to their coach, their ability to overcome barriers to reporting concussions, and their perceptions of their own, their teammates and their coaches concern for their health. A secondary purpose was to assess athletes' knowledge of the specific knowledge about concussions. Soccer athletes (N = 157; 93 females & 74 males; age 11-14 years) completed a survey near the end of their season that included measures of the climate (e.g., caring, task, ego) and variables listed above. A canonical correlation analysis [$L = .52$, $F(18) = 6.58$ ($p < .001$); $C_{corr} = .62$, 39% overlapping variance] revealed that athletes who perceived a highly caring/ task-involving climate on their teams, indicated a greater likelihood to report concussion symptoms to their coach during regular and big (tournament, rival) games, and perceived that their coach and teammates care about their health. A second canonical correlation analysis [$L = .66$, $F(45) = 1.32$ ($p < .01$)] revealed that athletes' perceptions of a caring/task-involving climate (with a de-emphasis on an ego-involving climate) was associated with athletes feeling they could overcome many barriers to reporting concussion symptoms to their coaches (e.g., lose position, disappoint coach; risk soccer future). Results highlight the potential value of middle school athletes perceiving a positive and supportive climate on their teams to prevent and treat concussions in youth sport.