



Coaches' perceived roles and behaviors with sport-related concussions

Presenters:

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Abstract:

Concussions are one of the most contentious issues in sport and have concerned stakeholders at all levels due to the short- and long-term consequences associated with the injury (e.g., Caron, Bloom, Johnston, & Sabiston, 2013). Researchers have found that some athletes underreport concussions (Kroshus, Baugh, Daneshvar, & Viswanath, 2014), which has implications for athletes, their families, as well as their coaches. Amidst the growing concern and public awareness of concussions, coaches have been under increasing pressure to manage concussions properly. The purpose of this study was to gather coaches' insights on their perceived roles and behaviors with concussions, including the measures they have taken to create a safer sporting environment. Six male and two female high school coaches participated in individual interviews and the data were analyzed using a hierarchical content analysis (Côté, Salmela, Baria, & Russel, 1993; Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The inductive analysis revealed higher-order categories that were labeled Coaches' Roles with Concussions and Recommendations for Concussion Education. Results from this study indicated that coaches felt they were aware of the dangers associated with concussion injuries so they spent more time teaching and reinforcing safety techniques during practices and competitions. Another one of the coaches' perceived roles with concussions involved communicating with athletes and encouraging them to accurately report concussion symptoms. Due to their concerns about the injury, participants also forwarded a number of recommendations to improve efforts to educate coaches about concussion safety. The current findings are of interest to coaches at all levels because the results provide practical coaching insights aimed at fostering a safe and supportive sport environment.