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HEALTH SCIENCES

A COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS AND STUDENTATHLETES ON THE COLLEGIATE LEVEL REGARDING EATING DISORDERS (248 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to analyze the differences in perceptions about institutional policies, procedures, and educational programming in regard to eating disorders between athletic directors and student-athletes participating in selected sports at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II (DII) designated institutions. This study will make a valuable contribution to the body of literature since there is no published research addressing this concern from the perspective of athletic directors.

For the purpose of this study, a population study was conducted with athletic directors. Also, a random sample of six NCAA DII institutions was generated to obtain access to student-athletes as subjects that were representative of athletes participating on sports teams at DII colleges and universities.

The time frame for the data collection process was conducted between the fall and winter of 2010-2011. The data collection protocol followed the Dillman Tailored Method (DTM; 2000). A four-page, 24-item instrument was developed and administered to athletic directors. In addition, a four page, 23-item instrument was developed and administered to student-athletes.

Out of 10 hypotheses, eight statistically significant findings were revealed. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between eating disorder formal education, educational opportunities, knowledge, and respondent status: student-athlete or athletic director. In addition, the results revealed a statistically significant difference between athletic department eating disorder rules and regulations, referral process, prevention, support, influential individuals, and respondent status. Future research is needed to determine what intervention and evidence-based practices are best to help address these statistically significant differences and respondent status.