Evaluating the Relationship between Concussion Knowledge and Reporting Tendencies in High School Athletes

Atherall, Joseph (School: Yorktown High School)

Concussions are a brain injury caused by an outside blow to the head or rapid movement of the brain inside of the skull. Over 3.8 million high school athletes are affected by these injuries annually, this number increasing by 200% between the years 2002 and 2012. As an athlete who has suffered concussions, I was curious as to how these injuries may affect me in the future, as well as to see if other athletes had gone through the same experiences as I have. I created two surveys through the online resource Qualtrics, analyzing the academic effects of these concussions and concussion reporting trends in high school athletes. Questions pertained to the overall academic issues faced as well as social issues encountered in the first phase. Followed by separate questions asking athletes about their concussion history and whether or not they reported these to their coaches/athletic trainers. I found that overall concussions did show to have a negative effect on academics ($p<.05$), as well as one in four athletes not reporting their concussion. These results shows that these injuries have had detrimental effects on students, meanwhile some of the injuries are so discredited that they are not even being reported. In the future, I would like to create outreach programs bettering the knowledge surrounding concussion education. If greater concussion education was introduced into the athletic realm, this could spark a positive concussion reporting trend suppressing the effects of these injuries, ultimately creating a healthier and safer future for these athletes.

Awards Won:

American Psychological Association: Certificate of Honorable Mention