

“Secondary School Athletic Trainers’ Clinical Management Decisions toward Low Socioeconomic Status Student Athletes”

PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This study will quantify perceptions of clinical management decisions toward low socioeconomic status (SES) patients and identify challenges and strategies to upholding a standard of care when providing care to low SES population.

STUDY BACKGROUND

There is considerable evidence that patient socioeconomic status (SES) has contributed to observed disparities in health care. Research has also demonstrated that a patient’s SES can influence physician’s clinical management decisions impacting their recommendations on the timing of advanced imaging, testing, and surgical intervention. Despite secondary school ATs providing direct preventative care, evaluation, diagnosis, and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions to the pediatric population, there is a significant gap in knowledge regarding how a patients’ SES status influences ATs’ clinical management decisions.

OBJECTIVE

To describe secondary school ATs’ perceptions of clinical management decisions toward their low SES patients.

DESIGN & STUDY

Sequential mixed methods.

SUBJECTS

Secondary school athletic trainers.

MEASUREMENTS

Questions were ranked on a 4-point Likert scale on level of relevance and agreement. Data were summarized by means and standard deviations (SD), frequencies and proportions

(%), and median scores where appropriate. Qualitative data were collected via interviews and interpretative phenomenological analysis was implemented.

RESULTS

380 ATs responded (years of experience mean=14.92±11.68 years). Most ATs believed that their patient’s economic stability (56.7%), health and health care (71.3%), and neighborhood and built environment (59.8%) were relevant social determinants of health when providing care. Most ATs agreed that patient SES impacts referral for advanced care (67.4%). ATs identified compliance (70.2%) as a barrier. Three themes emerged: (a) mechanisms for identifying SES, (b) impact of SES on care, and (c) navigating SES challenges in care. ATs described several strategies to identify low SES patients and provide a high standard of care .

CONCLUSIONS

ATs perceived health and health care as the most relevant determinant. When ATs further considered patient SES, they identified all SDOHs as barriers they were ill equipped to navigate.

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PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR



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Mayrena Isamar Hernandez, MPH, LAT, ATC is a PhD Candidate in Kinesiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison set to graduate in May 2022. At UW-Madison, she has made it her goal to bridge research in youth sport safety through a public health approach. Her experiences as an athletic trainer, a degree in public health, and her personal background as a first-generation Mexican American have all informed a progressive and focused line of research. Mayrena’s research centers on how socioeconomic status (SES) impacts participants in youth sports and their musculoskeletal injuries. During her doctoral work, she has completed both qualitative and quantitative studies that examine how low SES and/or minority race/ethnicity youth athlete families are impacted by the negative consequences of sport specialization. She has observed that these vulnerable populations struggle to access sports and physical activity and do so in ways that may increase the risk of sustaining an overuse injury. Additionally, she is interested in how medical care is delivered to this population. Specifically, she is assessing how athletic trainers navigate providing care to patients in low SES groups and how these factors may impact clinical management decisions.



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