

BURNOUT IN GRADUATE ASSISTANT ATHLETIC TRAINERS IN THE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY SETTING

Winton T*, Gilbert JN, Sailor S, Pettitt R: California State University, Fresno, Fresno, Ca *Chapman University, Orange, Ca

Context: Burnout, the result of unrelieved chronic stress, can lead to attrition from the athletic training profession. Graduate assistant athletic trainers (GAAT) work in a high stress environment; as recent graduates they suffer from an increased risk of burnout due to underdeveloped coping skills and a potentially large increase in hours worked.

Objective: The present study examined the relationship of two factors that may contribute to burnout in GAATs: the difference in hours worked as an undergraduate athletic training student and those as a GAAT as well as role ambiguity in GAATs.

Design: Descriptive survey. **Setting:** The college/university setting. **Patients or Other**

Participants: Of 215 potential participants, the entire accessible population from the NATA database, a total of 76 surveys were returned (response rate ~35%). Fifty-five (~25%) met the criteria for inclusion in the study. **Interventions:** Participants were mailed a series of four self-report surveys including the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI – HSS) (Maslach et al., 1976), the Role Ambiguity Scale (RAS) (Rizzo et al., 1970), the Quick Stress Questionnaire (WVU Carruth Center, n.d), and a demographic survey. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were calculated for each survey and presented in graphical format to determine a linear or non-linear stress burnout relationship. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was calculated to determine the amount of burnout explained by the level of stress measured in the participants, a previously explained relationship. There were also coefficients of determination calculated to measure the individual relationships of the difference in hours and role ambiguity to stress. Coefficients of determination were calculated to discover the relationship between the difference in hours and role ambiguity. Finally, the coefficients of determination were calculated to explore the independent relationships that the difference in hours worked and role ambiguity had with burnout, and thus the influence that each independent variable (role ambiguity and the difference in hours) had on the dependent variable (burnout). **Main Outcome Measures:** Burnout was determined according to the scale published with the MBI – HSS and role ambiguity by the RAS. Hours were obtained from the demographic survey **Results:** An increase of 16.20 hours ($t_{54} = 8.10, p < 0.05$) per week worked by GAATs was found when compared to athletic training students but there were poor correlations (R-squared < 0.20) between the hours difference and role ambiguity with burnout. Most GAATs (85.5%) reported at least a moderate level of burnout on one of the subscales of the MBI – HSS. **Conclusions:** There is a significant increase in the hours worked by GAATs. While most GAATs (85.5%) report a moderate level of burnout this is poorly explained by the hours difference or role ambiguity most likely due to a homogenous sample obtained in the study. **Word Count:** 450