

Why University Athletes Choose Not to Reveal Their Concussion Symptoms During a Practice or Game

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Objective: To determine why athletes decide not to seek medical attention during a game or practice when they believe they have suffered a concussion.

Design: A retrospective survey.

Setting: University Sport Medicine Clinic.

Participants: A total of 469 male and female university athletes from several varsity team sports were participated in the study.

Main Outcome Measures: Athletes were surveyed about the previous 12 months to identify specific reasons why those athletes who believed they had suffered a concussion during a game or practice decided not to seek attention at that time, how often these reasons occurred, and how important these reasons were in the decision process.

Results: Ninety-two of the 469 athletes (19.6%) believed they had suffered a concussion within the previous 12 months while playing their respective sport, and 72 of these 92 athletes (78.3%) did not seek medical attention during the game or practice at least once during that time. Sports in which athletes were more likely to not reveal their concussion symptoms were football and ice hockey. The reason "Did not feel the concussion was serious/severe and felt you

Clinical Relevance: Medical staff should be aware that university athletes who believe they have suffered a concussion may choose not to volunteer their symptoms during a game or practice for a variety of personal and athletic reasons.

Key Words: concussion, symptoms, team sports, university, reasons
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INTRODUCTION

Concussions are a common occurrence in sport. Some estimates have suggested that almost 3 million sport or recreation-related concussions occur each year in the United States.¹ Not all concussions are recognized, diagnosed, and treated.² It is believed that a significant number of sport concussions go unrecognized or undiagnosed.³ Rapidly identifying, evaluating, and managing athletes who have suffered a concussion or more severe brain injury is vital. Clinicians who identify and treat these athletes must address immediate safety concerns such as ruling out serious intracranial pathology, intermediate concerns such as managing concussion symptoms and neurocognitive impairment, and long-term concerns such as safely managing the return to play process in these athletes.