

ABSTRACT

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Title: The Effect of an Educational Program on Increasing Student Athlete Awareness of the Role of the Speech Language Pathologist in Managing Concussion Symptoms to Facilitate the Return to Academics

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College athletes are prone to concussions, which can cause physical as well as cognitive issues. The NCAA mandates education be provided to coaches and athletes and that concussion management protocols be in place. Education typically focuses on the physical symptoms and the return to play; however, there is insufficient focus on the cognitive symptoms which can lead to difficulty with academics. Athletes are often unaware speech-language pathologists (SLP) can provide additional support in the return to academics process and help address any persisting cognitive symptoms. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a concussion education module improved athlete's knowledge of concussion symptoms, the role of the SLP in concussion management, and the likelihood of seeking assistance from an SLP. Participants included 20 student-athletes at SCSU. An educational video with testimonials from former athletes and a narrated presentation on concussion symptoms was created. Data on student athletes' knowledge of concussion symptoms, role of the SLP in concussion management, and resources available was gathered before and after viewing the educational video. On the survey, 11 questions were related to physical symptoms and 9 were related to cognitive symptoms and the role of the SLP. Results showed a significant increase in accurate responses from pre-test (mean of 16.85) to post-test (18.50). There was no significant difference in the accuracy on questions related to physical symptoms from the pre-test (10.20) to the post-test (10.35). However, the accuracy on questions related to cognitive symptoms and the SLP increased significantly from a mean of 6.55 to 8.30. Post-video, significantly more athletes were likely to seek the assistance of an SLP if they sustained a concussion (from 4/20 to 17/20). The use of a concussion education program was successful in increasing the student-athletes' knowledge of symptoms and the role of the SLP in concussion management.