

## **Southwestern University Student Athlete Wellbeing Survey - Pilot Study**

NADIA E. NETEK, VANESSA Q. MIKAN, and EDWARD K. MERRITT

Human Performance Laboratory; Kinesiology Department; Southwestern University;  
Georgetown, TX

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*Category: Undergraduate*

*Advisor / Mentor: Mikan, Vanessa (mikano@southwestern.edu)*

### **ABSTRACT**

1 in 5 Americans live with a mental health condition. Student athletes' mental health is imperative for their performance and overall health. The pressures and challenges student athletes face can contribute towards a poor mental state. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is encouraging athletics departments to create a culture of mental wellness. **PURPOSE:** To assess the wellbeing (state of health and happiness emotionally, physically, and psychologically) of student athletes at Southwestern University. **METHODS:** Using Google Forms, a survey was created including questions that would examine the anxiety (BECK anxiety scale) and stress (combination of the Student Stress Scale and the Inventory of College Students Recent Life Experiences) levels in Division III student athletes. The survey also assessed student athlete perception as well as Daily Recovery (i.e. sleep, hydration, eagerness to train, upper/lower body soreness and wellness level). An introductory email was sent out to all (n=514) student athletes informing them of the study and survey. Two days after the introductory email was sent, an email including the link with the survey was sent out to all athletes requesting participation. The survey was available for three weeks and a reminder email was sent out at the beginning of each week. Once the survey link was closed, each participant was categorized into a low, moderate, or high level of stress and anxiety. **RESULTS:** A total of (n=148) participants completed the survey however, two did not provide consent for a total of (n=146) responses. Anxiety and stress scores identified low ( $12 \pm 8.72$ ) levels of anxiety and moderate ( $39.84 \pm 9.79$ ) levels of stress. Overall perception of the mental wellbeing survey was positive and well received by the student athletes. The Daily Recovery survey was not well received and perceived as a 'daily hassle'. **CONCLUSION:** Student athlete feedback indicated they would appreciate more individual counseling from the athletic trainers over daily recovery scores. Evaluating stress and anxiety levels throughout the semester will allow administrators to track the mental wellbeing of our athletes (in season and out of season). At risk students can then be identified and guided toward necessary services to improve mental health.