

The Impact of Socialization on Newly Certified Athletic Trainers?

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ABSTRACT

Professional education programs can often focus purely on course content. The lack of socialization especially amongst diverse communities can hinder the development of soft skills especially in those preparing for a career in healthcare. **PURPOSE:** Athletic trainers are not only a part of their work environment, but also their unique individual community. They develop a relationship with their athletes, fellow faculty, physicians, and other stakeholders. No matter their own personal background, to be an effective athletic trainer they must be able to engage in the varying aspects of their work environment. If they are unable accomplish this, their standard of care can be stifled. This study was designed to answer if the athletic trainers who find themselves in a new population assimilate well within their patient population. **METHODS:** For this study a survey was created for those who met the specific criteria. Those who could participate in the survey needed to be an athletic trainer who has only been certified less than 5 years. This survey asked participants multiple choice questions about their undergraduate and graduate athletic training programs as well as current work environment. These questions included topics on racial and social economic diversity. The survey was sent out via email and social media. **RESULTS:** Of the respondents, 67.5% identified as female and 32.5% male. 56.25% reported as being of Caucasian ethnicity, 25% African-American, and the rest chose other (non-Asian and non-American Indian). 50% attended an athletic training program (ATP) 100 or more miles from their hometown with an average cohort size of 11-15 students. Participants reported no statistically significant difference between genders when responding to being asked if their ATP helped prepare them for the cultural difference in their current work setting ($p=.806$). However, there was a significant difference when comparing the answers to this question based upon the individual's ethnicity ($p=.045$). **CONCLUSION:** While athletic trainers generally believe that the socialization and education they receive in their ATP helps to prepare them for the culturally diversity they will encounter in their workplace, there are variances based on the individual's ethnicity as well as background prior to entering the ATP. This information can be utilized to further enhance the programs delivery of didactic concepts including those that relate to cultural competency in healthcare.