



Mid Atlantic Regional Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine

Annual Scientific Meeting, November 5th - 6th, 2021
Conference Proceedings
International Journal of Exercise Science, Issue 9, Volume 10



NSAID Usage Patterns & Amount of Negative Side Effects in Shippensburg University Student Athletes

Brogan Loudon, Malayna Rowe, Randy Smith, Mike Lingard, Alexi Castro, Samuel T. Forlenza, Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA

The usage of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) by college student-athletes could cause negative side effects if not used properly. While NSAIDs have been shown to relieve/block pain and help athletes' bodies heal and recover at a faster rate, overuse, misuse, and constant use over time can have unfavorable lasting impacts relating to GI distress, or even heart and liver damage. **PURPOSE:** To determine how student athletes at a NCAA Division II school use, perceive, procure and understand NSAIDs and possible adverse effects. This information could help inform and assist both athletic and medical professionals by allowing them to better educate and care for their athletes and patients.

METHODS: 70 intercollegiate athletes (52 female; M age 19.70 ± 1.29 yrs) participated in this study. After consent was received from all individuals, they were given a demographic questionnaire and a questionnaire pertaining to knowledge of NSAIDs, usage patterns, and potential negative side effects.

RESULTS: No significant correlation was found between class year and NSAID consumption ($p > .05$). However, weight was significantly correlated with the greatest amount of pills consumed in one dose ($r = .361$, $p < .01$) and the greatest number of pills consumed in a day ($r = .307$, $p < .05$). In regard to NSAID usage in the anticipation of pain, 38.5% indicated they used NSAIDs for that purpose. When athletes were asked if they thought NSAIDs could negatively impact healing, 48.6% did not believe they could and 21.4% were unsure. Regarding side effects, 12.9% did not think NSAIDs were capable of causing tumor growth and 47.1% were unsure. Finally, 30% of athletes admitted to taking more than the daily recommended NSAID values. **CONCLUSION:** Over one-third of athletes used NSAIDs in anticipation of pain rather than alleviating pain, and well over half were unaware of harmful side effects.

Moderately-strong correlations between the highest number of pills in one dose and highest number of pills in one day were evident with weight and other variables, which will be discussed. While NSAIDs can be beneficial for short term pain management, this survey demonstrates that many student-athletes are unaware of the side effects of overuse or prolonged use of NSAIDs.