Concussion Occurrence and Perception Survey for Athletes (COPSA)

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**Context:** Underreporting of concussions is a problem in high school athletics. Additionally, little is known as to what factors influence the athletes’ unwillingness to report concussive signs and symptoms (s/s). **Objective:** Identify athletes’ perception, reporting values, and occurrence of concussive s/s. **Design:** Survey study. **Setting:** Urban high schools. **Participants:** 302 male and female athletes participating in a 2010-2011 sport. Response rate was 20.13%. **Interventions:** A construct validation process was used to design a paper and pencil survey. Flesch-Kincaid program was utilized to ensure appropriate wording. A panel of survey-research design and concussion experts evaluated the survey’s content validity. Athletes were grouped into high head impact sport (HHIS), low head impact sport (LHIS), or both (B). Frequency statistics and chi-squares were used to analyze data. Three (group) x three (response) chi-square analyses were used to test associations in response options between groups (p=.05). Significant chi-squares were followed up with pair wise 2 x 3 chi-squares using a Bonferroni correction (p=.017) as needed. **Main Outcome Measure(s):** Athletes responded to demographic information and concussion s/s data across 4 domains (knowledge, concern, report, and occurrence). Athletes answered yes or no questions as well as questions using a 5-point likert scale. **Results:** Over half of LHIS athletes and 20% of HHIS athletes reported they did not have any concussion knowledge (p=.002). Seventy-two percent of LHIS athletes were “maybe concerned” about poor balance (p=.001), and over half of HHIS athletes “would not even think about being concerned” about poor balance (p=.007). Least concerning s/s were extra sad (42%), noise hurts my head (34%), nervous (33%), and easily tired (30%). Seventy-one percent of the LHIS athletes and 50% of HHIS athletes reported they “may report” feeling easily fatigued (p=.014). Signs and symptoms least likely to be reported were grumpy (36%), nervous (30%), and extra sad (27%). Almost 30% of HHIS athletes stated they “sometimes” get dizzy after a sports-related head impact (p=.003). Sixty-three percent of athletes participating in B reported “sometimes” feeling dizzy after a sports-related head impact (p=.003). The most commonly occurring s/s that “sometimes” or “always” occur after a head impact were headache (40%, 9%), dizzy (29%, 5%), blurred vision (24%, 3%), and “dinged” (19%, 4%). **Conclusion:** Urban high school athletes are concerned and would report s/s that are overtly detrimental to their health, but those s/s that occur most often after a head impact athletes seem to be less concerned about and may not report those s/s. Athletic trainers should be aware of the s/s that are occurring most often and that students are less likely to be concerned or report. **Word Count:** 427