

Introduction

- Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use has been described among adult and collegiate athletes, but data on adolescent populations—particularly high school athletes—remain limited and outdated.
- Understanding patterns of CAM knowledge and use during adolescence is important given potential implications for performance, safety, and future health behaviors.

Methods

- Cross-sectional, observational survey study conducted in local high schools that are partnered with the Lehigh Valley Health Network Sports Medicine program.
- Anonymous surveys distributed in health course to assess awareness and use of various CAM modalities
- Students self-identified athletic status and type
- Data collected via paper forms and will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and comparative frequency analyses

Example of Survey

Complementary and Alternative Medicine Observational Study in High School Athletes Survey

Purpose of this study:
Complementary and Alternative Medicine is defined as group of diverse medical and health care practices and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine. This survey is to look at what forms of complementary and alternative medicine you know of and possibly use. We are asking you these questions because no study has been performed for young adults in high school. We are simply curious about what forms of practices or supplements high school age athletes use to improve or enhance their performance, and why. This study is optional, but we would greatly appreciate your answers and input.

Box 1 – Forms of Activity

Athletes are defined as “A person who is trained or skilled in exercises, sports, or games requiring physical strength, agility, or stamina.”
Based on the definition above, do you consider yourself an athlete?
___ No, I Do NOT consider myself active.
___ Yes, I DO consider myself an athlete.
If yes, what sport(s) or activities do you participate in?

Box 2 –What do you know of?

Have you ever heard of or know about the following therapies?					
Chiropractic Medicine • Rearrange bones, crack joints	Yes	No		Yes	No
Osteopathic Medicine • Use of therapeutic pressure or force to treat muscular, bone, or tissue issues	Yes	No		Yes	No
Homeopathic Medicine • Small doses of natural substances, prepared in a specific way, to restore health	Yes	No		Yes	No
Herbal or Dietary Supplements • Natural performance enhancers, items bought at any stores or online sellers	Yes	No		Yes	No
Massage Therapy	Yes	No	Yoga	Yes	No
Meditation	Yes	No	Spiritual Healing	Yes	No
Acupuncture	Yes	No	Cupping	Yes	No
Any other forms that we might have missed? Please list below anything else that you have heard of to help with physical performance:					



Results

- Pilot High School: 2 returned surveys.
- Planning to transition from Opt-in to Opt-out consent and has been approved
- Another Distribution of surveys planned
- Project will be taken over and expanded by current PGY-1 Classmates.

Conclusion

- This study will provide contemporary, region-specific data on CAM awareness and use among high school athletes and non-athletes
- Will serve as a foundation for future research and potential preventive or educational strategies within adolescent sports medicine.

References

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