

“The ‘Why’ Behind the Secondary School Athletic Trainer: Experiences with the Social Determinants of Health Project Proposal”

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Understanding the social determinants of health (SDoH) is crucial for providing high quality healthcare for athletes at schools in low socioeconomic environments. Our study aims to gain insight into the experiences of secondary school athletic trainers (ATs) whose primary treatment population is considered “in-crisis” by the US Census Bureau’s Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program levels of low income. We plan to recruit ATs by utilizing the Athletic Training Locations and Services (ATLAS) database and sending prospective participants a recruitment email. We will complete virtual semi structured interviews with a validated interview guide aimed at understanding ATs’ socialization and provision of care at “in-crisis” secondary schools until data saturation is reached. We will use a phenomenology approach to analyze the data and multi-analyst triangulation and peer review will be used to secure trustworthiness.

IMPACT ON THE ATHLETIC TRAINING PROFESSION

Our study will impact the athletic training profession by showcasing the ingenuity that occurs within the profession while providing recommendations to those who currently work or desire to work in secondary schools with a high percentage of low-income students. The study will also help current athletic trainers in secondary school settings with students of low socioeconomic status have a stronger sense of how the negative effects of the SDoH can be mitigated during patient care. Due to the nature of low SES areas, our study may also bring to light specific scenarios where diversity played a role in the provision of care, a key component to the NATA research agenda. Findings may help create an atmosphere for the provision of the best possible patient care by ATs.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

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Kaitlyn Okin is a second-year MSAT student at the University of Lynchburg in Lynchburg, VA. She obtained her Bachelor’s degree in Public Health from Hollins University in Roanoke, VA in May of 2022. Her research agenda focuses on the impact of the social determinants of health in sports medicine, and overall healthcare accessibility. She plans to work as a collegiate athletic trainer post-graduation in May of 2025, and will pursue a PhD after working in the clinical setting for a period of time.