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Assessing Knowledge and Attitudes Towards Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) Amongst Medical Providers and Coaches.

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Abstract

Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) is a less known area in sports medicine that combines a multidisciplinary approach in treating athletes. It involves nutrition, behavioral health, medicine, and physical training, to name a few. Over the years, knowledge on what was first understood as, “The Female Athlete Triad”, has increased to encompass different aspects of one’s health. It has also become a term that not only affected female athletes but also males. With the ever-increasing utilization of social media and the perceived importance of public image perception among one’s peers, many young and even adult athletes have higher risks of developing RED-S. Medical providers (physicians, athletic trainers, physical therapists, nutritionists, etc.) and coaches are often first line in identifying this condition and refer to treatment, yet little is known about their opinions and knowledge surrounding RED-S. In this study, providers and coaches were surveyed using a combination of questions utilizing the Likert scale and free responses. Outcome measures and results were analyzed based on the responses. The results of the study show that knowledge of RED-S amongst coaches and medical providers still need improvement. Specifically, the comfort level in not only identifying but also managing RED-S in athletes varied based on profession as well as years in practice. This study further solidified that there is a need to continue to identify gaps in knowledge and understanding of RED-S among medical providers and coaches who work closely with athletes in order to provide better treatment for athletes with this condition.