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Drug education and the college athlete: evaluation of a decision-making model.
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In general there is a lack of information describing the components and structure of drug education and prevention programs (DEPP) for college student athletes. While concern about the prevalence of drug abuse among college student athletes has increased, a relative lack of clarity remains regarding what elements of drug education prevention programs have been successful or unsuccessful in this setting. In an effort to address this issue at Oregon State University a two-credit ten-week DEPP was implemented as a requirement for all collegiate athletes. This article describes the evaluation of this program. Altogether 635 student athletes from three National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division One universities provided data in this two-year evaluation project. Participants were student athletes from Oregon State University (OSU), a Mid-Western University (MWU), and another Pacific North-Western University (PNWU). Pre- and post-test data were collected regarding knowledge about drugs, attitudes toward drug use, drug use, and decision-making factors. Students at OSU and MWU were enrolled in a structured DEPP, and the third group from PNWU was used as a control and did not receive regular instruction. The baseline data taken before the drug education course indicated that athletes at OSU, MWU, and PNWU were no different in their knowledge of drugs, attitudes toward drugs, or perception of the value of drug education in preventing drug abuse among student athletes. However, the data at the end of the ten-week course revealed many significant improvements among OSU and MWU students athletes, in knowledge, attitude related to performance enhancing drugs and recreational drugs, and perceptions of drug education. At the end of the course 88 percent of the participating OSU athletes agreed that drug education can be effective in preventing drug abuse among student athletes.

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