




CENTER FOR SPORT PSYCHOLOGY
AND PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

at the University of North Texas



COLLEGE STUDENT ATHLETES' COVID-19 INFECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITH COVID-19 RELATED LIFE EVENTS: A SUMMARY REPORT

The University Of North Texas Center for Sport
Psychology and Performance Excellence and in
collaboration with Wayne State University

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Overview and Methodology

- During the fall semester 2020, college student athletes returned to their campuses with the intention of fulfilling their academic and athletic roles. As they did, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to unfold internationally, with surges occurring through the summer and into the later fall 2020. Although avoiding infection was a key response to this pandemic, and many have been able to do that, COVID-19's effects extend far beyond the physical disease. Student athletes and their families, like individuals throughout the world, have had to deal with its ripple effects across so many areas of life (e.g., housing, jobs, finances).
- Thus, the purpose of this phase of our ongoing longitudinal study of college student athletes' mental health and psychological well-being was to assess the extent to which they, and their families, have been directly impacted by COVID-19. Understanding these impacts can frame the stress they experience as they (and their families) navigate this pandemic.
- Our data collection occurred during October 2020. We sent the study to all student athletes who had participated in our April/May assessment (see https://sportpsych.unt.edu/sites/default/files/covid_baseline_report_compressed.pdf). The data collected in October represent the THIRD wave of our ongoing assessment of student athletes' mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In this phase, just over 1,600 student athletes participated. In the pages that follow, we report our findings, which provide a framework for understanding how COVID-19 has impacted the lives of college student athletes.



Who Participated?

- The overall N's within each table will vary due to some student athletes not providing either their gender and/or race/ethnicity.
- Within the Race/Ethnicity table, Other refers to individuals who selected a race other than White or Black and did not identify as Latinx.

NCAA Division Level	%	<i>n</i>
I	67.0	1113
II	17.9	297
III	15.1	251

Gender	%	<i>n</i>
Men	23.2	285
Women	76.8	1277

Race/Ethnicity	%	<i>n</i>
White	79.3	1117
Black	5.5	77
Other	7.2	102
Latinx	8.0	112

COVID-19: Quarantine, Infection, and Illness/Death


- The percentages represent how frequently student athletes in each category endorsed each item. Student athletes responded to each item using the timeframe from March 2020 to October 2020.

	Men	Women	White	Black	Other	Latinx
Did someone close to you, such as a family member, have to be quarantined due to COVID-19?	48.7%	53.1%	54.0%	43.2%	46.9%	62.3%
Did you have to be quarantined due to COVID-19?	44.2%	43.3%	44.9%	32.4%	45.8%	44.3%
Was someone close to you, such as a family member, diagnosed with COVID-19?	33.5%	37.1%	37.8%	36.5%	29.2%	43.4%
Were you diagnosed with COVID-19?	9.9%	9.0%	10.4%	4.1%	8.3%	7.5%
Did someone close to you, such as in your family, become severely ill with, or die from, COVID-19?	6.8%	7.8%	6.4%	9.5%	11.5%	14.2%

COVID-19: Extended Impact on Student Athletes' and Families' Lives

- The percentages represent how frequently student athletes in each category endorsed each item. Student athletes responded to each item using the timeframe from March 2020 to October 2020.

	Men	Women	White	Black	Other	Latinx
Someone in student athletes' family lost their job (e.g., was fired, furloughed, temporarily suspended).	22.0%	26.9%	25.4%	33.8%	38.5%	30.2%
Someone in student athletes' family did NOT have enough food to eat, such as going to bed hungry.	2.5%	1.7%	1.4%	4.1%	6.3%	1.9%
Someone in student athletes' family had to move from where they had been living.	1.1%	2.8%	2.1%	2.7%	3.1%	5.7%
Someone in student athletes' family was NOT able to pay rent or utilities or other bills due to insufficient finances.	5.1%	2.8%	2.4%	9.5%	1.0%	5.7%
Student athletes did NOT have enough food to eat, such as going to bed hungry.	3.1%	2.5%	2.2%	8.1%	3.1%	4.7%
Student athletes had to find a job/employment to help with their family's finances.	11.8%	12.9%	11.6%	17.6%	18.8%	17.0%
Student athletes lost a job or were unable to find a job for the summer.	21.4%	28.3%	28.4%	23.0%	27.1%	28.3%
Student athletes were NOT able to pay rent or utilities or other bills due to insufficient finance.	3.1%	3.3%	3.4%	8.1%	1.0%	5.7%



COVID-19: Impact on Academic Performance

- The percentages represent how frequently student athletes in each category endorsed this item. Student athletes responded to this item based on what occurred during their Spring 2020 term.

	Men	Women	White	Black	Other	Latinx
Given the changes that your school made in how classes were delivered, such as having classes online, was your academic performance during your Spring 2020 academic term worse than you would have otherwise expected it to be?	32.1%	30.4%	31.5%	18.9%	31.3%	26.4%



Discussion

- Approximately 50% of the student athletes themselves, or someone in their families, had to quarantine due to COVID-19.
- About 10% of student athletes and almost one-third of their families have been diagnosed with COVID-19; just under 8% had a family member become severely ill or die due to COVID-19.
- Latinx student athletes' families were disproportionately affected in all areas of physical health related to COVID-19.
- In terms of how COVID-19 impacted other life areas, student athletes and their families were primarily affected in their employment (e.g., losing a job, being unable to find a job, etc.); about 25% of student athletes and their families were affected as such.
- Overall, few student athletes or their families (i.e., less than 5%) went hungry, had to move from their places of residence, or were unable to pay their bills. Consistent with national data, the families of student athletes of color were disproportionately affected across these life areas.
- In terms of academics, just over 30% of the student athletes reported performing more poorly during the spring 2020 semester than they would have otherwise expected, suggesting that the move to a virtual educational environment had a negative impact on their learning and performance.



Conclusion

- This report was based solely on the data collected from the NCAA student athletes who participated in the study. The findings, which are based on these student athletes' responses, do not reflect the views or perspectives of the NCAA, the University of North Texas, nor Wayne State University. The results reflect only the reported experiences from the student athletes who comprised this sample.
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- For more information, visit the UNT Center for Sport Psychology and Performance Excellence at sportpsych.unt.edu or email us at sportpsych@unt.edu.