

Parent Perceptions of Athletic Trainers at the Secondary School Setting

[3 spaces] Natoli R*, Singe SM†, Bradney DA*, Bowman TG*: *University of Lynchburg, †University of Connecticut.

Context:

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of parents' perceptions of the skills and abilities of ATs working in the secondary school setting. Our qualitative study included semi-structured recorded interviews via Zoom that we transcribed verbatim. We recruited 13 parents (age=33±52, 10=females, 3=males) who currently had one or more child(ren) participating in school sanctioned sports from a secondary school with a full-time AT. All participants stated ATs were *critically important* to secondary school sports due to their ability to provide a safe environment for athletics. Parents demonstrated a *general understanding* of the skills and primary duties of ATs; however, parents lacked a *complete appreciation* of ATs' roles and responsibilities. Participants had a large gap in knowledge of the *complete scope* and were unaware of the *educational requirements* of the athletic training profession. Although parents said they would feel *uneasy* if ATs were not present to provide medical coverage during sport participation, they would still allow their child(ren) to participate depending on their perception of risk involved suggesting a lack of AT cultural capital. Although ATs are *trusted* healthcare providers in secondary schools, efforts to improve perceptions of athletic training professional identity should continue.

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