Studies have been conducted on the scope of sports wagering by student-athletes, as this population has the ability to control performances, game outcome, and/or provide insightful game related information (NCAA, 2004; NCAA, 2008; NCAA, 2013a). Not far from this notion, yet unrepresented in the literature, is the review of athletic trainers as it relates to sports wagering and gambling. Specifically, athletic trainers may possess confidential information regarding the mental and physical well-being of student-athletes and therefore might be valuable resources for those who want to obtain confidential health-related information to increase their chances of winning a sports wager. Thus, the purpose of this study was to ascertain the scope of athletic trainers’ involvement in gambling and sports wagering. This study employed a non-experimental, exploratory, mixed-survey design to help determine possible gambling and sports wagering behaviors of athletic trainers. All NCAA Division I certified athletic trainers with publicly available e-mail addresses were targeted. Twenty-eight percent of those targeted (N=453) responded to the survey. Findings indicated that almost 38% of the athletic trainers have placed monetary bets on sporting events and almost 16% indicated they did so in the last 12 months. As such, this study provided rationale to extend sports wagering studies outside of the student-athlete population.
The growth and popularity of the sport industry in the U.S. is almost without match and is currently estimated at approximately $435 billion (Plunkett Research, 2010). Although the product that drives the sport industry is the game/event itself, a multitude of related products and services benefit from their immense popularity, both in the U.S. and worldwide. One such area is sports betting. The National Football League (NFL) attracts more gamblers than any other sport which is evidenced by the $87.5 million wagered in Nevada’s sports books on the 2014 Super Bowl (Casinos barely profit from Super Bowl, 2014). Additionally, the American Gaming Association, (AGA: “Sports wagering,” n.d.), noted that in 2012, $3.45 billion was legally wagered in Nevada’s sports books.

Organized sports have been a primary target for wagering activities for over 100 years, and the ever-present and immense popularity of intercollegiate athletics today has only heightened gambling activities within collegiate sport. Yet, interestingly, Petry (2003) noted that gambling on sport, when compared to other forms of gambling, is more often associated with problem gambling. Consequently, investigators and policy makers have been examining gambling and sport wagering behaviors among vulnerable groups including college and university students, as gambling habits developed at a younger age may progress into more severe gambling problems later in life (Ellenbogen, Jacobs, Derevensky, Gupta, & Paskus, 2008). The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has taken a clear stance and is opposed to both legal and illegal sports betting involving college sport teams, and states that sports wagering is a serious problem that threatens the well-being of student-athletes (Ellenbogen, et al., 2008).

One reason the NCAA and its member institutions display concern regarding sports wagering involving student-athletes is due to their ability to influence the outcome of games (Thornton, Champion, & Ruddell, 2011) Therefore, numerous studies have been conducted by the NCAA and its member institutions on the scope of gambling and sports wagering involving student-athletes. Studies (Cross & Vollano, 1999; Cullen & Latessa, 1996; Rockey, Beason, & Gilbert, 2002) have estimated that the sports wagering prevalence rates for NCAA student-athletes ranges from 22%-45%. In addition, NCAA studies (2004; 2008; 2013a) noted that student-athletes wagered on sports and also conspired and/or were approached to fix and or throw sporting events.

Though numerous studies have been conducted on sports wagering, the focus of these projects has been limited to student-athletes. It is understandable that student-athletes might be at risk for being targeted by those who gamble or wager on sports. For instance, student-athletes have the ability to control performances, game outcomes, and/or provide insightful game related information. Student-athletes, however, do not represent the only group capable of such influences. Certified athletic trainers (ATCs) work closely with collegiate athletes. They not only provide recommendations regarding athletes and their participation but also contain key knowledge concerning injuries and other influential aspects of athletes participating on the team. Surprisingly, there is no research into the potential dangers of ATCs and sports wagering activities.

ATCs often possess confidential information regarding the mental and physical well-being of the student-athletes they serve and may be involved in making decisions regarding a student-athlete’s playing status. Although ATCs do not physically compete in collegiate athletics contests, they have the ability to potentially impact the outcome of such events through
either (a) changing a prognosis for an injured student-athlete or (b) providing confidential health-related information to a third party. As such, ATCs could potentially represent a valuable source of information for those wagering on sporting events. For example, during the 2006 NCAA Division I men’s basketball tournament, an ATC from one of teams remaining in the tournament received a suspicious text message inquiring about inside information (Armour, 2007).

ATCs working at NCAA member institutions are bound by the same sports wagering rules governing other athletics department staff members and student-athletes (NCAA, 2013b). In addition, they must follow the National Athletic Trainers Association’s (NATAs) Code of Ethics, that includes two principles applicable to this issue, Principle 4.3, which states that “members shall not place financial gain above the patient’s welfare and shall not participate in any arrangement that exploits the patient” and Principle 4.4, which states, “members shall not, through direct or indirect means, use information obtained in the course of the practice of athletic training to try to influence the score or outcome of an athletic event, or attempt to induce financial gain through gambling” (NATA, 2005). Principle 1.3 involving the disclosure of confidential information may also be applicable, stating “members shall preserve the confidentiality of privileged information and shall not release such information to a third party not involved in the patient’s care without a release unless required by law.” Even for those ATCs not a member of the NATA, the Board of Certification (BOC) Standards of Professional Practice, which oversees the certification of ATCs, also specifically mentions gambling. Under the section entitled Professional Responsibility, Code 3.11 states that athletic trainers should not “take any action...[related to] improperly influenc[ing] the outcome or score of an athletic contest or event or in connection with any gambling activity” (BOC, 2006). Finally, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) would also apply, which protects the privacy of student records, which would include the confidential medical information of student-athletes.

A dearth of research exists examining the relationship between ATCs and sports wagering. ATCs have not been identified in any studies dealing with gambling or sports wagering even though they are in an environment surrounded by student-athletes who have been identified as having an increased risk of developing gambling-related problems compared to the student and adult population (Ellenbogen, et al., 2008). Further, ATCs often have close friendships with student-athletes as a result of being emotionally involved in their lives (Hendrix, Acevedo, & Hebert, 2000). A clearer understanding of the relationship between ATCs and sports wagering might allow sport administrators and governing bodies to better protect college athletics from the potential corruption of sports wagering.

Literature Review

Gambling defined means “1a: to play a game for money or property, b: to bet on an uncertain outcome,” or “2: to stake something on a contingency: take a chance” (Merriam-Webster, 2011a). Another way of defining gambling is by reviewing the different types of activities that constitute gambling. The four major types of gambling activities are pari-mutuel betting, lotteries, casino gambling and charitable gaming with one form of pari-mutuel betting being sports betting or sports wagering (Eadington & Cornelius, 1991). To wager means to make a bet or to risk or venture on a final outcome (Merriam-Webster, 2011b). For the purpose of this research, sports wagering is betting on sporting contests while gambling refers to other forms of betting.
This illegal sports wagering behavior and activity poses major ethical dilemmas for those in athletics administration (Thrasher, Andrew, & Mahony, 2007). Given the fact that NCAA member schools and their student-athletes have been involved with a litany of sports wagering incidents over the past 75 years, it is understandable that the NCAA has a zero tolerance policy as it relates to student-athletes wagering on sports. Specifically, the NCAA passed NCAA Bylaw 10.3 which essentially precludes the NCAA conference or athletics department staff members and student-athletes from knowingly providing information to individuals involved in organized gambling activities (NCAA, 2013b). In addition, these staff members and student-athletes are also precluded from soliciting and/or accepting bets on any collegiate contest for an item of tangible value, or otherwise participating in any gambling activity that involves intercollegiate athletics or professional athletics contests (NCAA, 2013b). Despite this policy, over 100 student-athletes have been suspected of participating in wagering-related activities including but not limited to: point-shaving, betting, providing inside information to bookmakers, and intentionally losing games (or not losing or winning games by the margins established by the oddsmakers) (Cross & Vollano, 1999). Additionally, since 1999, NCAA member institutions have reported 13 sports wagering (NCAA Bylaw 10.3) violations involving both athletics department staff and student-athletes (NCAA Legislative Services Database, 2014). Violations include but are not limited to wagering on: fantasy leagues, March Madness pools, and professional and college sporting events. For instance, Rick Neuheisel, former head football coach at the University of Washington and University of California at Los Angeles, was cited for violating the NCAA’s regulations on sports wagering in 2003. Specifically, Coach Neuheisel was fired for wagering on the NCAA Basketball Tournament (Thornton et al., 2011), but later was vindicated based off of a procedural issue (ESPN.com, 2005).

Protecting the integrity of college athletics and protecting student-athletes from the dangers of gambling appear to be a driving force in the NCAA membership’s decision to enact such strict bylaws surrounding sports wagering infractions (Rockey & King, 2006). Student-athletes can be ruled permanently ineligible depending on the severity of the violation and they must request to have their eligibility reinstated after the mandated loss of eligibility has been served (NCAA, 2013b). However, the extreme penalties associated with violating NCAA sports wagering rules have not seemed to deter student-athletes from doing so. This is aligned with findings from Rockey et al. (2002) who found that student-athletes are more likely to be problem gamblers when compared to the general student population and that male student-athletes had high rates of pathological gambling.

Therefore, a need exists to examine this population’s gambling/sports wagering behaviors. To date, ATCs have not been identified in any research studies dealing with gambling and, particularly, sports wagering (Mathner, Martin, & Allen, 2013). As previously mentioned, however, ATCs have considerable knowledge concerning athletes on their respective teams and could hold other information that could be used as an influencing factor on a gambler’s decision-making. Therefore, a need exists to examine this population closely tied to athletics and their gambling behaviors.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the present study is to ascertain the scope of NCAA Division I ATCs’ direct and indirect involvement in sports wagering as well as their understanding of “being informed” about the NCAAs’ bylaws regarding sports wagering and gambling. Specifically, this
study will focus on three areas. First, participants were asked to answer questions regarding their involvement and behavior surrounding sports wagering or other gambling activities. Secondly, participants were asked questions surrounding the provision of confidential health related information to individuals who might wager on sporting events. Thirdly, participants were asked questions regarding whether they were informed of the NCAA policies regarding sports wagering and gambling.

The study was guided by the following primary research question:

1. What proportion of NCAA Division I ATCs have gambled in the past 12 months and/or report having gambling-related problems?

Additional research questions were addressed and include:

a. Of those who have gambled in the past 12 months, what proportion of NCAA Division I ATCs wager on collegiate and professional sports?

b. Of those who have gambled in the past 12 months, what proportion of NCAA Division I ATCs knowingly provide information to an outside source about the physical or mental well-being of a student-athlete or team?

c. Of those who have gambled in the past 12 months, what proportion of NCAA Division I ATCs unknowingly provide information or have been contacted to provide information to an outside source about the physical or mental well-being of a student-athlete or team?

d. Of those who have gambled in the past 12 months, what proportion of ATCs are informed on the NCAA’s bylaws regarding sports wagering and gambling?

**Method**

This study employed an exploratory survey design to help estimate gambling and sports wagering behaviors of ATCs. In addition, this survey asked participants additional questions that assessed their awareness of NCAA sports wagering bylaws as well as their perceived sports wagering behaviors of their colleagues. As such, cause and effect findings could not be determined, but rather the focus was to determine the scope of such behaviors. Given the nature of the survey, the researchers aimed to ensure the participants the utmost anonymity by only collecting and reporting group data in addition to not maintaining any IP address information. Also notable, no incentives were provided to complete the study. Given that these steps were taken to maintain anonymity, certain variables that are typically considered and reported (e.g. response rate by institution, etc.) were not reported. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board.

**Sampling Procedures**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), approximately 4,710 athletic trainers are employed at a college, university or professional school. Although, there are 4,710 athletic
trainers at the college, university or professional school level, there are likely notably fewer ATCs at the NCAA Division I level. With this noted, the sampling frame included all NCAA Division I ATCs who had a publicly available e-mail address posted on their respective athletics department websites. A total of 1,617 ATCs’ e-mail addresses were obtained from 318 NCAA Division I athletics department’s websites. An electronic link to the survey, which was delivered through Survey Monkey software, was then distributed via e-mail to all ATCs within the sampling frame. E-mails sent to the potential participants stated that “As a NCAA Division I ATC, they were selected for participation in a research study with the intention of gathering information regarding sports wagering behaviors of NCAA Division I ATCs”. In addition, the Informed Consent section of the Survey Monkey instrument, contained similar verbiage but also indicated that the surveys were being made available to NCAA Division I full-time ATCs. A follow-up e-mail was sent two weeks after the initial e-mail, thanking the participants and requesting non-respondents to consider completing the online survey. This was sent to all 1,617 e-mail addresses so as to not give the appearance that selected non-respondents were targeted for a follow-up e-mail and thus jeopardizing anonymity. The survey closed after four weeks.

**Measures**

A 50-item survey was utilized to assess gambling/sports wagering and or non-gambling/sports wagering behaviors of ATCs. In addition, the survey was utilized to report additional behaviors not directly related to gambling/sports wagering but were important to better understand the current climate of ATCs knowledge regarding the issue. The survey was an adapted and modified version of *The NCAA National Studies on Collegiate Wagering Survey*. Permission to use and adapt the survey was provided by the NCAA. In cases where there may have been multiple interpretations on a definition or concept, clarification was provided. For instance, the respondents were provided with clarification on the term/phrase *unknowingly provided information*. Specifically, after the question was stated, a clarification statement followed the question that read as follows: *Information was not solicited by an outside source and you realized after providing the information that you may have erred in providing this information*. Examples of the questions answered by the ATCs included the following:

1. How often have you engaged in each of the listed gambling, wagering, or betting activities during the last 12 months?
2. Have you ever made a friendly wager on any sporting event?
3. Have you ever placed a monetary bet (of any size) on any sporting event?
4. Since becoming a certified athletic trainer and working at an NCAA Division I institution, have you ever knowingly provided inside information to an outside source about the physical or mental well-being of a student-athlete or a team that you cover?
5. Since becoming a certified athletic trainer and working at an NCAA Division I institution, have you ever unknowingly provided inside information to an outside source about the physical or mental well-being of a student-athlete or a team that you cover?
6. I have never received information or education from athletics department staff regarding the NCAA rules against gambling (yes or no response).
It should be noted that several screening questions were utilized to differentiate the non-gambling ATCs and the gambling ATCs. The participants were asked to respond to 14 Likert scale items. If participants responded “not at all” to all 14 items, they were asked to discontinue the survey, as the primary focus of the study was to determine gambling and wagering behaviors of ATCs, thus the removal of non-gamblers was justifiable. If participants responded that they had, on any level (daily, at least once a month, at least once a week, or less than a month) participated in gambling activities, they were asked to continue the survey and to answer additional questions regarding their gambling and sports wagering behavior. Thus, the second half of the survey only pertained to the ATCs who have gambled, as this group was the primary target for the study. It should be noted that all responses (those associated with non-gambling/non-wagering and gambling/wagering activities) were recorded and included in the results.

Data was transferred from SurveyMonkey into SPSS Version 17.0. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were reviewed and provided overall percentages that assisted in explaining the scope of ATCs’ gambling and sports wagering behaviors, and provided responses to the research questions. The results are reported in the subsequent section by question.

Results

Participants

A sample of 453 NCAA Division I ATCs responded to the survey, yielding a 28% response rate. However, of these 453 participants, only 311 indicated that on some level they had, in fact, gambled and/or wagered previously. As such, the first half of the survey was completed by 453 participants and the second half of the survey was completed by 311 participants. The participants’ profiles are reflected in Table 1. The ATCs represented in the sample collectively covered more than 23 sports. With this noted, the most common sports covered by the represented ATCs included: basketball (35%), football (25.3%), soccer (22%), volleyball (16.6%), tennis (16.4%) and outdoor track and field (14.0).

Table 1 - Participants’ Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;45</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hispanic  
Other  

NCAA Division  
FBS  
FCS  
Other  

ATC Experience  
<5 years  
6-10 years  
11-15 years  
16-20 years  
>21 years  

Research Questions

1. What proportion of NCAA Division I ATCs have gambled in the past 12 months and/or report having gambling-related problems?

Though only three individuals (.7%) reported gambling as a self-identified problem, several reported gambling in some fashion. Results indicated that 72.2% (n=311) did, in fact, gamble in some form while 27.8% of ATCs did not gamble at all in the past 12 months. Thus, in addressing the first research question, findings suggest that the majority of ATCs are gambling. With this, those that did gamble were asked to continue the survey and respond to survey questions to address the remaining supporting research questions.

   a. Of those who have gambled in the past 12 months, what proportion of NCAA Division I ATCs wager on collegiate and professional sports?

Several questions were asked of the ATCs to address this research question. First, ATCs who self-reported gambling and/or wagering behavior over the past 12 months were asked if they have ever made a friendly or monetary wager on any sporting event. Of those who responded, 61.6% indicated that they had placed a friendly wager on sports, while 37.8% indicated that they had placed a monetary bet (of any size) on a sporting event. ATCs were then asked to identify the collegiate and professional sports in which they have wagered money during the past 12 months. Of those individuals who responded to this item, 15% indicated that they placed monetary bets on professional and/or collegiate sports. Table 2 reflects the professional and collegiate sporting events that were wagered on by ATCs. To elaborate on this research question, no ATCs provided that they had, in fact, bet on a sport team that they covered. However, 1.1% did reveal that they had placed bets on another team at their respective school while 7.7% had bet on another college team at a different NCAA institution.
Table 2 - Sport Events Wagered on by ATCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>(n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super Bowl</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s NCAA Final Four</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Bowl Games</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Playoffs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLB World Series</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Cup</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLB Playoffs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Final Four</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHL Playoffs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Of those who have gambled in the past 12 months, what proportion of NCAA Division I ATCs knowingly provide information to an outside source about the physical or mental well-being of a student-athlete or team?

In addressing this research question, ATCs were asked if they had ever knowingly provided information about a student-athlete and/or team that they cover. Of the 271 respondents, no ATCs knowingly revealed providing information to an outside source regarding an individual student-athlete or team that they cover.

c. Of those who have gambled in the past 12 months, what proportion of NCAA Division I ATCs unknowingly provide information or have been contacted to provide information to an outside source about the physical or mental well-being of a student-athlete or team?

For the purpose of placing a sports wager, 1.8% of ATCs revealed that they were likely to have unknowingly provided such information to an outside source. In addition, 8.1% of ATCs reported having actual knowledge of a fellow ATC at their institution and 8.5% of ATCs at other institutions who have been contacted by an outside source to share information about the physical or mental well-being of a student-athlete and/or team.

d. Of those who have gambled in the past 12 months, what proportion of ATCs are informed on the NCAA’s bylaws regarding sports wagering and gambling?

Though most ATCs have received information or education from the athletics department staff regarding the NCAA rules against sports wagering, 15.2% noted they had never received such information. Although select schools may have attempted to disseminate NCAA sports wagering rules, 24% of ATCs noted that such information does not specifically discourage them from placing bets on sports. Further, the threat of NCAA imposed penalties has not discouraged the sports wagering behaviors of the individual ATC or ATCs in general as indicated by 24.7% and 28.1% of respondents respectively. Respondents (17.6%) also perceived that most ATCs in schools across the country violate NCAA rules regarding sports wagering.
Discussion

The results of this project are being compared to the NCAA’s most recent findings pertaining to gambling among student-athletes (2013). Specifically, the researchers will utilize the results from this project to serve as an evidence-based means to suggest that sports wagering studies should extend past the student-athlete population. More precisely, ATCs could be just as at-risk as the student-athletes as they too are familiar with the sports covered and have an element of game control.

Results from the latest NCAA Student-Athlete Gambling Behaviors and Attitudes study revealed that 57% of male student-athletes and 39% of female student-athletes reported gambling over the past year (NCAA, 2013a). These results do not completely align with the present study’s findings as 72.2% of ATCs noted that they have engaged in gambling, sports wagering or other betting activities during the past 12 months. However, the results do indicate that almost half of the 2012 student-athletes surveyed gambled within the past year and ATCs are gambling at a higher rate. Additionally, compared to findings from Barnes, Welte, Hoffman, and Tidwell (2010), the ATC population would fall just below the general college population’s gambling prevalence rate of 75%. Though this is concerning, the fact that 15% of ATCs placed monetary bets on professional and intercollegiate athletics is of higher concern, as reports have suggested that sports betting, when compared to other forms of gambling, is more often associated with problem gambling (Petry, 2003).

This study also addressed if ATCs might unknowingly have provided information that could be used to place a sports wager. For instance, this study sought to determine if ATCs might in the course of normal conversation or another communication format unknowingly release information on a student-athlete’s mental or physical well-being. With this, only in retrospect might the ATC realize that they erred by releasing such information. Results suggest that about 1.8% of ATCs revealed that they unknowingly may have provided such information to an outside source that could be used for the purpose of sports wagering, an amount that is approximately 1.0% higher than the 2012 NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball student-athlete population, 1.5% higher than the 2012 NCAA Division I Football student-athlete population, and 1.3% higher than the 2012 NCAA Division I, II and III overall male student-athlete population (not inclusive of Division I Basketball and Football student-athletes) (NCAA, 2013a). Moreover, 8.1% of the ATCs had actual knowledge of a fellow ATC at their institution who was contacted by an outside source to share such information about the well-being of a student-athlete or team. As noted, these results are slightly higher than the highly studied student-athlete population; this is interesting given that ATCs are actually informed by both the NCAA and through the NATA Code of Ethics which restricts the sharing of patient/client information. It should further be noted that not only are these numbers slightly higher than the student-athlete population, but also, it is likely that conservative estimates are reported; only responses from those ATCs who self-identified as gamblers were used to address the area regarding whether or not they knew of ATCs who knowingly or unknowingly provided information to an outside source. Thus, had all ATCs been included, even those who do not engage in gambling and/or sport wagering, the results yielded may have been different.

ATCs should know the regulations that govern gambling and sports wagering. However, 15.2% stated they were not aware of such polices. Despite the information being disseminated by the NCAA and its member institutions, 24.2% of ATCs did not feel as if it would discourage them from placing bets. Also, 17.6% of ATCs indicated that they felt their colleagues at other
universities do in fact, violate the NCAA regulations regarding sports wagering, a notably smaller percentage when compared to the 46.75% of the NCAA 2012 student-athlete population indicating their athlete peers violated such rules (NCAA, 2013a).

Limitations

This research study aimed to ascertain the scope of NCAA Division I ATCs’ involvement in sports wagering. It should be noted that several limitations existed, and thus the findings are constrained. For example, the study’s findings can only be generalized to NCAA Division I ATCs who had publicly available e-mail addresses on their respective athletics department websites. Though the researchers utilized a modified form of *The NCAA National Studies on Collegiate Wagering Survey*, the instrument was lengthy and may have discouraged participation in the study. Also, given the subject nature (i.e. illegal activity of gambling and ethical working dilemmas) of this project, some ATCs may have opted not to participate. Though, the instrument was able to solicit valuable information from the ATCs, there were some limitations noted in retrospect. For example, the questions that differentiated the gambling population and non-gambling population were warranted yet misplaced in the survey. Specifically, these questions were placed prior to the questions regarding an individual ATC’s knowledge of other gambling ATCs. Thereby, the findings stemming from such questions may yield conservative estimates. Likewise, the questions distinguishing gamblers and non-gamblers were focused on behaviors that could be recalled over the past 12 months. Thus, it is likely that some individuals may have gambled in the past (beyond 12 months), and possibly to great degrees, yet for the purpose of this project, they did not complete the survey. The study was conducted under the assumption that the respondents were truthful in their responses. With this, the results should be interpreted with caution as some respondents may have recorded replies that were biased, thereby limiting the results. Additionally, the results may have been different if more of the non-respondents completed the survey. In particular, the percentage of the respondents indicating they had, gambled on sport, or could recall another ATC gambling on sport knowingly may have been altered if more individuals responded. A final noted limitation was that the study was exploratory, and thus no cause and effect findings could be made. With the noted limitations, more research is needed in this area to better assess the degree to which ATCs at all levels (NCAA Division I, II and III) may be knowingly and/or unknowingly participating in gambling and sports wagering.

Conclusion

Through this study, the scope of NCAA Division I ATCs’ involvement in gambling and sports wagering was explored. The NCAA, its member institutions, and the NATA need to be aware that gambling and sports wagering is a prevalent behavior for both student-athletes and ATCs. Overall, results were indicative that ATCs participate in gambling and sports wagering at varying degrees. For example, some ATCs have never gambled, some have only participated in friendly wagers, and others were self-identified problem gamblers. Though there were varying degrees of gambling and sports wagering involvement, most ATCs reported some form of friendly or monetary gambling and participated in legal wagers. However, if sports wagering is occurring to any degree with this professional population, it may warrant further investigation especially as it relates to abiding by NCAA rules on sports wagering.
Results of this study did suggest that ATCs gambled and mainly wagered on professional and collegiate sporting events. Also, findings indicated that although no ATCs knowingly provided information to outside sources regarding the mental and/or physical well-being of their student-athletes to an outside source, some did suspect that other ATCs were doing so. Further, some indicated that in retrospect, they may have unknowingly released information to an outside source. With this, the NCAA, the member institutions and NATA should consider creating more awareness around the dangers of sports wagering. Table 3 provides several applications for practitioners.

Table 3 - Application for Practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attention should be given to educating athletic trainers on the dangers of gambling (friendly and monetary) and wagering on sports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Athletic trainers should be educated on recognizing patterns of problem gambling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The NCAA should draft clearer policies and procedures should gambling and sports wagering for all athletics department staff members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The NATA should draft clearer policies and procedures regarding gambling and sports wagering for all athletic trainers; this might include accountability statements for athletic trainers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. A plan should be developed to assist in reporting problem gambling and sports wagering; this may evolve from better defined policies and procedures of the NCAA and the NATA.</td>
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<td>6. Information should be made available to athletics administrators and managers indicating that the athletic training population is a potential target to known gamblers.</td>
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</table>

This project provided evidenced-based rationale to further extend sports wagering studies outside of the realm of student-athletes. Within the sports contexts, there are several individuals who are privy to individual student-athlete and team information and or who might have an element of control over the game. For so long, sports wagering studies have focused on the student-athlete population, yet have not considered exploring other populations such as ATCs, Athletics Academic Advisors, Coaches (team/strength), Equipment Managers, and other athletics administrators and support staff. This is alarming considering recent gambling scandals involving collegiate student-athletes, staff members, and even sports wagering scandals involving professional sports. With this, it is recommended that future studies focus on determining the prevalence of gambling and sports wagering among intercollegiate athletics administrators, coaches, directors and managers.
References


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