

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Application of the Theory of Anticipatory Guidance to Identify Nutrition Education Needs, Eating Disorder Risk, and Nutrition Knowledge and Attitudes of Freshmen and Sophomore Collegiate Athletes.

NAME: Lindsay M. Martin

DEGREE: Masters of Science in Dietetics

COLLEGE: Applied Science and Technology

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A variety of health organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Dental Association, have employed the concept of anticipatory guidance to avert potential health risks among their patients. The application of anticipatory guidance with underclass collegiate athletes, however, has not been identified in the literature. The purpose of this mixed-methods, quasi-experimental study was to assess the eating disorder risk and nutrition knowledge of underclass Division I collegiate athletes at a Midwestern university and to determine the viability of using the theory of anticipatory guidance to identify the athletes' nutrition education needs related to six nutrition related key topics. Of the forty athletes who completed three assessments, results indicated a desire and a need for more nutrition information. The Sports Nutrition presentation significantly increased the sport nutrition knowledge among the collegiate athletes compared to the control group. Analysis of the EAT-26 survey indicated seven of the 40 athletes were at risk for an eating disorder; of these, almost half (43%) were female gymnasts. Applying anticipatory guidance early in an athlete's career may potentially prevent future health problems and enhance performance.