NSAID Use and Overuse Among Student-Athletes: How Much is Too Much?

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In recent studies it has been documented that 50 million US citizens reported using a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) for acute complaints on a regular basis. Within these 50 million Americans, it was estimated that anywhere from 500,000 to 2.5 million of them would incur some type of renal abnormality (McEoy, 2008). The problem also takes on an added dimension when one considers that twenty percent of NSAID-using Americans are predisposed to developing renal toxicity because of a volume contracted state, low cardiac output, or other conditions that compromise renal perfusion (McEoy, 2008). Although most NSAID-induced complications are reversible, the challenge for healthcare practitioners is to identify the damage early enough so that it does not become irreversible. This poses a big problem for Americans who are at risk because often times they are asymptomatic and do not show any signs until their kidneys are down to thirty-five percent of their maximum functional capacity (McEoy, 2008). The current study seeks to examine and educate college student-athletes regarding the dangers of nonprescription strength non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) as it relates to renal dysfunction. The target population will include student-athletes enrolled at an eastern historically black college and university (HBCU) taking NSAIDS for sports-related injuries, muscle pains, headaches, menstrual cramps and/or arthritis. The participants will complete a cross-sectional, non-experimental questionnaire consisting of closed and opened ended questions. The questionnaire will assess the student-athletes' knowledge of self-care manufacturer recommended doses of NSAID medications, alternate pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments they may utilize, i.e., direction from their athletic trainer, and the student-athlete's primary source regarding correct uses of these products. Analysis of variance tests will reveal statistical significance among the usage of NSAID medications. Additionally, the data will be analyzed for common themes. The results of the study will be presented to the student-athletes as well as athletic trainers during a NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills program meeting schedule for March 30, 2010. These results will attempt to update and advance the current literature that is available on the topic of NSAIDS and their affects on the kidneys for the general population as well as student-athletes.