

## DOES A DIDACTIC INTERVENTION INFLUENCE ETHICAL IDEOLOGIES AND ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING IN UNDERGRADUATE ATHLETIC TRAINING EDUCATION STUDENTS?

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**Objective:** Ethical ideological education is essential to athletic training students' professional development and future practice as ATC's. This investigation aimed to examine how a five step ethics education instructional module would affect athletic training students' ethical ideologies and ethical decision-making abilities using the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) and Dilemmas in Athletic Training Questionnaire (DAT-Q). **Design and Setting:** The EPQ assesses two dimensions of ethical ideology: idealism and relativism. Idealism refers to the extent that individuals consider how the consequences of their actions affect the health of others. Relativism refers to the extent that individuals reject universal moral principles. The DAT-Q, inspired by Rest's Four-Component and Forsyth's Person X Situation models of morality, assessed subjects' ethical decision-making abilities when confronted with hypothetical ethical dilemmas. Observed psychometric properties of our data demonstrated evidence of construct validity for both the EPQ and DAT-Q via principal components factor analysis. Internal consistency via Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the EPQ's idealism and relativism subscales and the DAT-Q scale were .82, .70 and .83 respectively. The first three steps of the ethics education model were presented to a convenience sample of first-year athletic training students. Students participated in a guided dilemma discussion regarding ethical decision making, an examination of the National Athletic Trainers' Association Code of Ethics, followed by athletic training situational role playing concluding with a follow-up discussion. Participants completed a DAT-Q and EPQ immediately before and after the ethics module. **Subjects:** Thirty, first-year athletic training education students participated in this study. The response rate was 100%. **Measurements:** Three separate paired samples *t*-tests were performed utilizing idealism, relativism and DAT-Q scores as dependent measures. Type I error was set a priori at  $p < .05$ . **Results:** Respondents reported similar pre-idealism ( $36 \pm 4.4$ ) and pre-relativism scores ( $34.2 \pm 3.42$ ) as well as post-idealism ( $35.7 \pm 4.30$ ) and post-relativism scores ( $34.6 \pm 3.75$ ). The mean pre-DAT-Q score was ( $78 \pm 9.59$ ) and mean post-DAT-Q score was ( $73.3 \pm 9.1$ ) for all respondents. No significant differences in students' idealism, relativism, and DAT-Q pre and post scores were noted. **Conclusion:** Findings fail to support the use of a single didactic intervention in the improvement of ethical decision-making and ethical ideologies of first year athletic training education students. Therefore, educators must continue to explore alternative methods to improve ethical decision-making and ideologies.

**Word Count:** 376