

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE GROUPS IN THE MARKETING PERCEPTIONS OF ATHLETIC TRAINER AND ATHLETIC THERAPIST NOMENCLATURE IN THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

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As an increasing marketplace diversifies, the need to understand the differences in the perceptions of healthcare professional is paramount. **Objective:** Purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of four age groups in regards to the responsibilities of athletic healthcare professionals. **Design and Setting:** A 30-question survey, which addressed questions pertaining to the job responsibilities and qualifications of an athletic trainer, was developed based on the 1999 NATABOC's Role Delineation Study. Twelve certified athletic trainers from various settings and educational backgrounds were used to determine inter-rater reliability, content and construct validity of the survey. IRB approval was obtained. The researchers collected surveys from subjects visiting four state parks in the northeastern United States. For each question, participants were provided the following four options: (a) Athletic Trainer (ATer), (b) Athletic Therapist (ATist), (c) Both ATer and ATist, and (d) Neither ATer nor ATist. Subjects were classified into four groups: 18-20 years old (Age-1), 21-25 years (Age-2), 26-40 years (Age-3), and over 40 years (Age-4). **Measurements:** Descriptive and Chi Square statistics were calculated on SPSS 13.0. **Subjects:** Of the 608 subjects, 28% were male and 72% were female. Their age ranged from 18-90 years old,  $x = 30.6$  years. **Results:** There were significant differences found in age groups in the following job responsibilities: evaluates orthopedic injuries ( $X^2 = 33.1$  (9),  $p < .001$ ), applies splints to fractures ( $X^2 = 46.37$  (9),  $p < .001$ ), applies assistive devices ( $X^2 = 39.39$  (9),  $p < .001$ ), applies modalities ( $X^2 = 31.55$  (9),  $p < .001$ ), has a 4-year college degree ( $X^2 = 39.23$  (9),  $p < .001$ ), is recognized by the AMA ( $X^2 = 43.85$  (9),  $p < .001$ ), teaches ergonomic techniques ( $X^2 = 31.74$  (9),  $p < .001$ ), evaluates dermatological conditions ( $X^2 = 25.80$  (9),  $p < .01$ ), applies joint mobilization ( $X^2 = 23.08$  (9),  $p < .01$ ), applies taping and bracing ( $X^2 = 18.79$  (9),  $p < .05$ ), and applies massage ( $X^2 = 21.07$  (9),  $p < .05$ ). Standardized residuals of 2 or greater were considered significant. The age group that favored ATer was Age-1 in developing strength programs (18%). The group favoring ATist was Age-1 in evaluating orthopedic injuries (19%). The group favoring Both ATer and ATist was Age-1 in having a 4-year degree (21%). The group favoring Neither ATer nor ATist was Age-1 in evaluating dermatological conditions (21%). **Conclusions:** Younger individuals have a better perception of these job responsibilities. **Word Count:** 400