



# Race, Trust in the Athletic Trainer, and Pregnancy Disclosure in College Athletes

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## Introduction

The athletic trainer (AT) plays a crucial role in managing a pregnant student-athlete.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the pregnant student-athlete cannot receive proper medical care if they choose to conceal their pregnancy. Previous research suggests factors such as perceived training and performance changes, trust in the AT, athletic identity during pregnancy, and scholarship/sponsorship could influence the likelihood an athlete would disclose their pregnancy.<sup>2,3</sup> Additionally, health care disparity could contribute to the disclosure of pregnancy, as negative historical experiences by racial minorities have been associated with lower levels of trust in health care providers.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than their White counterparts. For these reasons, Black athletes may be less likely to disclose their pregnancy due to a lack of trust in their health care provider. A greater understanding of predictors of pregnancy disclosure could lead to greater support for the pregnant athlete and minimize racial disparities in medical care. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine whether college athletes' trust in their ATs, likelihood to disclose a pregnancy, and time to disclosure of a pregnancy would differ across race and scholarship/sponsorship status.



Follow the QR code to see our previous publication in the *Journal of Athletic Training*.

## Method

### RECRUITMENT

We recruited participants by emailing coaches and ATs of women's college track and field teams at all Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as well as similar institutions based on location, division, and/or religious affiliation (a total of 118 programs).

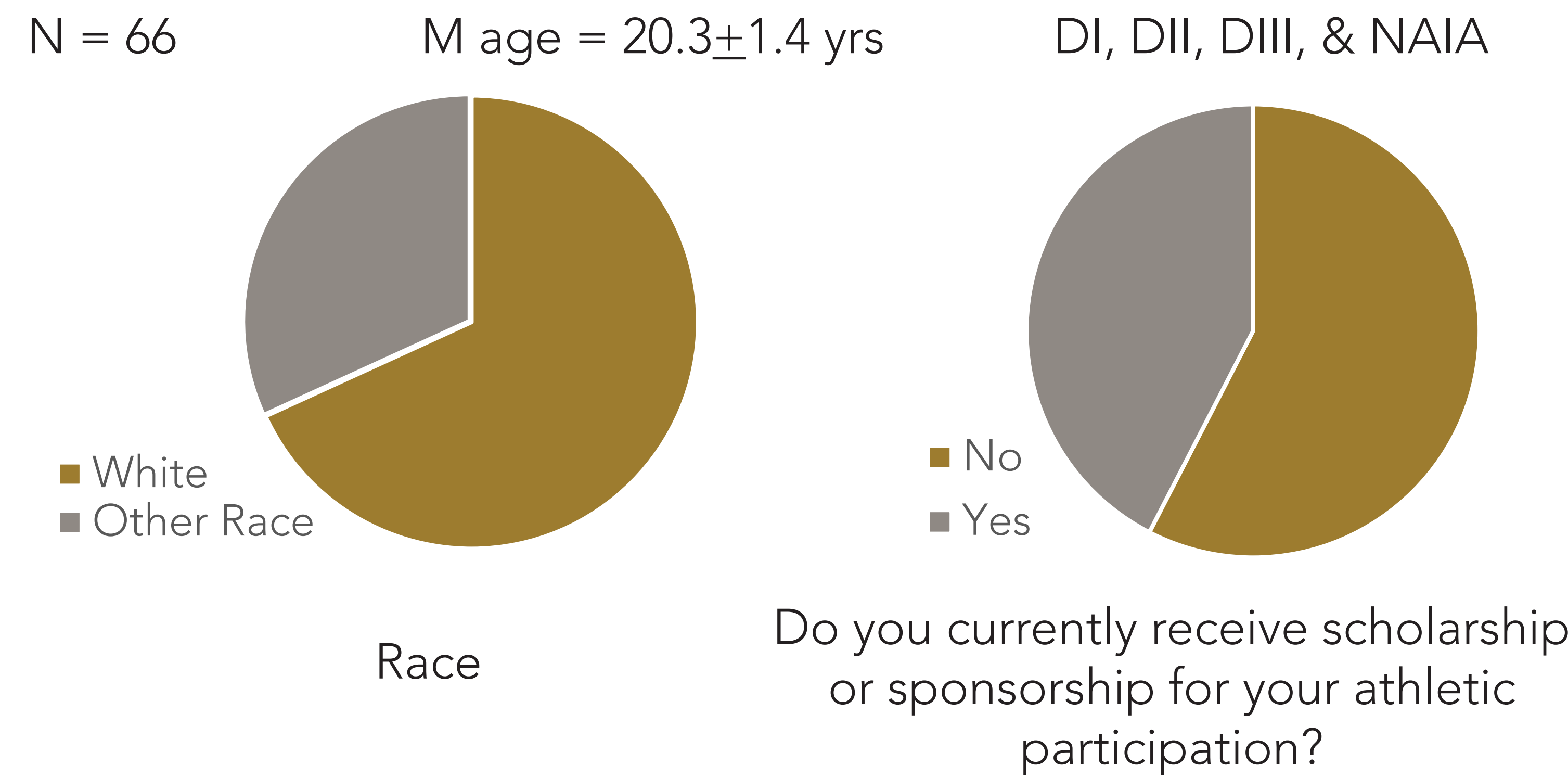
### SURVEY

Modified Wake Forst Physician Trust Scale<sup>5</sup> - 11 items  
"You completely trust your athletic trainer's decisions about which medical treatments are best for you."  
1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree)

Likelihood to Disclose Pregnancy - 4 items  
"If you were to become pregnant, how likely are you to tell your athletic trainer; coach(es); friends/family; teammates?"  
1 (not at all likely) to 5 (extremely likely)

Time to Disclosure - 4 items  
"If you were to become pregnant, when would you tell your athletic trainer; coach(es); friends/family; teammates?"  
1 (never) to 5 (immediately)

## PARTICIPANTS



## Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables					
Variable	M (SD)	Range	1	2	3
1. Trust in the AT	3.38 (.76)	1-5	.90		
3. Likelihood to Disclose	3.42 (1.02)	1-5	.20	.76	
4. Time to Disclosure	3.29 (.84)	1-5	.30*	.69*	.73

Note. \*p < .05; Chronbach's alpha coefficients along diagonal

T-Test Results Comparing Athletes on Race			
	White	Other Races	p
Trust in the AT	3.25	3.64	0.057
Likelihood to Disclose	3.54	3.15	0.157
Time to Disclosure	3.37	3.11	0.245

Note. \*p < .05

T-Test Results Comparing Scholarship/Sponsorship Status			
	Yes	No	p
Trust in the AT	3.60	3.20	0.036*
Likelihood to Disclose	3.25	3.54	0.259
Time to Disclosure	3.23	3.32	0.666

Note. \*p < .05

Time to disclosure was significantly positively correlated with trust in the AT, while likelihood to disclose was not. White athletes did not differ from athletes of other races in any of outcomes, though trust in the AT was trending toward significance (p = .057). Athletes receiving scholarship or sponsorship for their athletic participation reported greater trust in their AT than those who did not (p = 0.036).

## Discussion

The results of the correlation analysis aligned with previous research linking trust in the AT to time to disclosure (though likelihood to disclose was not related to trust).<sup>3</sup>

Results of both t-test analyses were unexpected, as greater trust was found in racial minority groups and those reporting receiving scholarship or sponsorship. These also contrast with previous literature on the relationship between race and trust, as well as qualitative research on pregnancy disclosure and concealment.

Though it is previously believed that athletes may be less likely to disclose their pregnancy out of fear of losing scholarship/sponsorship status, this may not be the case. Athletes receiving sponsorship or scholarship reported greater trust in the AT, but not greater likelihood to disclose a pregnancy. Thus, scholarship/sponsorship status may not be as salient a factor as argued in previous research.

ATs should do their best to build trust in their athletes, regardless of race or scholarship/sponsorship status. This research suggests that trust may play a more important role in an athlete's decision to disclose a pregnancy.

Limitations are the low sample size (due to low response rate) and disproportionate group sizes. We also used a hypothetical scenario to ask how the athlete would behave, which may introduce bias or socially desirable responding as the participants are not pregnant at the time of the study. Furthermore, only one participant reported having previously been pregnant.

Future research should continue to examine social determinants of health and how they might contribute to health care disparity for pregnant athletes.

## References and Resources

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