Athletic trainers provide medical care to athletes which includes the prevention and treatment of sports-related injuries. Most injuries associated with sports are musculoskeletal but other types of trauma, including dental trauma can occur. The incidence of dental trauma is related to the type of sport and the use of mouthguards. While collision sports such as football and hockey would be assumed to have the highest incidence of dental injuries, more dental injuries actually occur in contact sports such as basketball where mouthguards may not be routinely worn. The purpose of this study is to assess the knowledge that athletic trainers possess with regards to the treatment of dental trauma.

Methods

A survey will be distributed to athletic trainers in North Carolina to assess their level of knowledge to appropriately manage athletic dental injuries. This survey will inquire about specific demographics of the athletic trainer, such as education level, years of experience and sport setting as well as present several dental trauma cases to assess the AT’s knowledge.

Discussion

The National Athletic Trainer Association (NATA) has a position statement outlining the guidelines of the prevention and management of athletic dental trauma. If it is determined that athletic trainers are not proficient in the management of these injuries, continuing education (CE) courses could be provided by dental professionals and interprofessional study clubs could discuss sport-specific cases. In addition, we will look into how to adapt this into the Athletic Training curriculum at East Carolina University.

Results

Due to the rare occurrence of dental-related athletic injuries, the extent of knowledge for most athletic trainers is expected to be more focused on the prevention of these injuries with mouthguards as opposed to treatment.