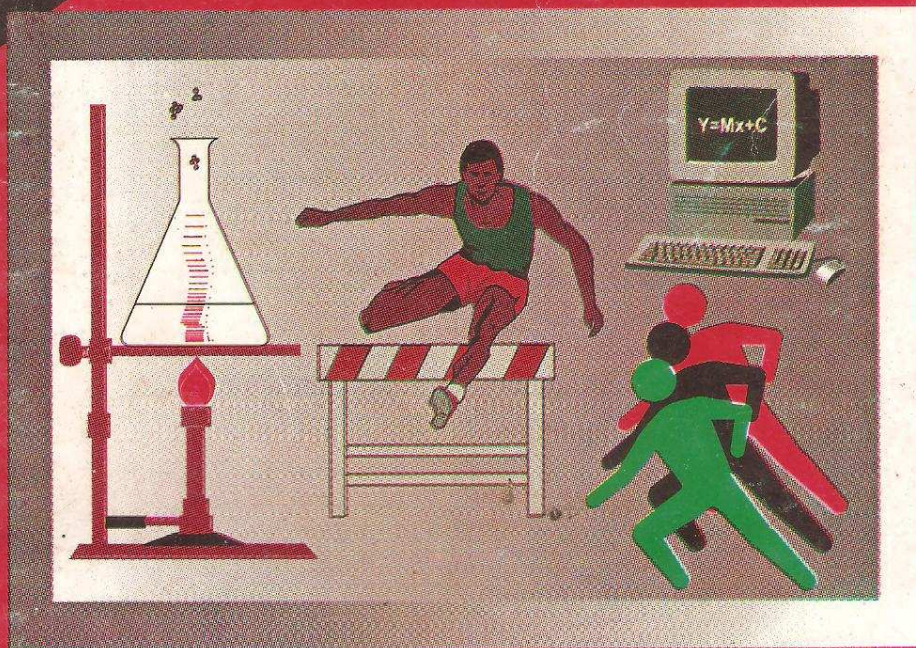


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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES OF INJURIES IN SPORTS CLASSES OF A COLLEGE OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the major causes of injury in sports classes of Physical and Health Education (NCE) students of Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria. The researchers adopted a validated questionnaire coupled with interview methods as the research instruments. The questionnaire was administered to randomly selected students of the department. The data collected was analysed, and the statement of hypotheses of the study were subjected to test using inferential statistics of Chi-Square. The results revealed that lack of adequate facilities and equipment, lack of interest and carelessness on the part of the students are among the major causes of such injuries. It was therefore recommended that adequate sports facilities and equipment should be made available to the department of Physical and Health Education of the college and pre sports class orientation should be given to new students before they attend any practical class.

Introduction

Partaking in contact sports such as soccer, basketball, cricket, and hockey often expose participants to danger of injuries. Physical Education students who take part in practical classes are not exempted.

Investigation carried out by the researchers (via interview) revealed that on many occasions during practical classes in Alvan Ikoku College of Education, injuries ranging from wound (especially abrasion) through strain/bruises/contusions to dislocations are sustained.

Nwankwo (1991) argued that sports participation by its very nature exposes students to more than the normal classroom risks in terms of injury. However, the important thing is not to avoid sports because of the relatively high accident rate, but to take adequate preventive measure to minimize the risks involved in sporting activities.

Participants in all sports must accept that there is an element of risk in their activity and indeed for sports men, the risk factor is one of the more important reasons for competing. The callout exertion require by the numerous situations of body contact and play that involve the striking and throwing of missiles established hazards that are either directly or indirectly responsible for the many and varied injuries suffered by athletes (Ladani, 1991). Irrespective of the nature, causes and mechanism, injuries according to Asembo (1995) are serious hazards in many sports and hampers players' performance both in training and competition, disrupt the conditioning process, and thus prevent them from realizing their playing potential.

Asembo (1995) affirmed that studies have shown that surveillance of injuries during training and competition assists in understanding their characteristics and thus goes a long way in helping to formulate the effective preventive, treatment and rehabilitative measures. Although injuries are inevitable in sports that require extreme demands in terms of strength, power, speed and endurance; and according to Ososanya (1991), as long as man compete with themselves, either in contact or non-contact sports, there will be one form of injury or another.

As a result of partaking in sports practical classes, there has been one form of injury or the other reported or not reported by the students. -In some instances, such injuries are very severe to the extent of disallowing the victim from taking part in subsequent classes. It is of essential need and as a matter of urgency to:

- i. Find out the causes of these injuries among the students during their practical classes; and
- ii. Suggest possible solutions to this pressing problem.

Methodology

The NCE students of Physical and Health Education Department of Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri served as the population of the study. 160 respondents were randomly selected (using stratified random sampling techniques) from the three classes based on the population of each class, i.e. 35, 45 and 80 from NCE 1/3, 2/3 and 3/3 respectively.

The instrument used for data collection in this study were interview schedules conducted by the researchers to find out the frequency of accidents in their practical classes, and questionnaire constructed to investigate the causes of injury among the NCE Physical and Health Education students of Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, during their practical classes. To test the reliability of this instrument, it was subjected to test-retest, and the reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.78. More so, the instrument was used to three lectures in the department for validation.

The data collected were subjected to analysis using inferential statistics of chi-square, at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Table 1 indicated the analysis of data on if lack of standard facilities and equipment would be a major cause of injury in sports classes.

X^2			
DF	Alpha Level	Tab X^2	Cal X^2
12	0.05	21.03	93.34

This result indicated that the hypothesis which states that lack of standard facilities and equipment would not be a major cause of injury in the NCE sports classes was rejected since the calculated chi- square value 93.34 is greater that the critical value 21.03 at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 2: Table 1 indicated the analysis of data on if lack of interest on the part of students could lead to injuries in the sports classes.

X^2			
DF	Alpha Level	Tab X^2	Cal X^2
4	0.05	9.49	9.71

The above analysis indicated that the calculated chi square value 9.71 is significantly greater than the 9.49 tabulated value at 0.05 level of significance. Based on this, the hypothesis, which states that the lack of interest on the part of the students would not lead to injury in the NCE sports classes, is rejected.

Table 3: Table 3 indicated the analysis of data on if carelessness on the part of the students could cause injury in sports classes.

X^2			
DF	Alpha Level	Tab X^2	Cal X^2
8	0.05	15.51	17.29

The result of the above analysis indicated that the calculated chi square value 17.29 is greater than the tabulated value 15.51; connoting that the statement of hypothesis which says carelessness on the part of the student should not lead to injury in the NCE sports classes is rejected.

Table 4: Table 4 indicated the analysis of data on if lack of experience, good class organization and teaching method on the part of the lecturer could cause injury in sports classes.

X^2			
DF	Alpha Level	Tab X^2	Cal X^2
16	0.05	26.30	105.60

The analysis on the above table indicated that the calculated chi square value 105.60 is significantly greater than 26.30 of critical value at 0.05 level of significance; indicating that the hypothesis which says lack of experience, good class organization and teaching method on the part of the lecturers would not lead to injuries in NCE sports classes is rejected.

Discussion

The result of the analysis on Table 1 indicated the calculated chi square value to be greater than the table value, indicating that one of the major causes of injury during sports classes in the college is lack of good sports facilities and equipment. This result conforms with the result of Bolatito (1991) which stated that many injuries in sports are caused by carelessness due to mechanical difficulties like hole in the turf of the practice fields, dirt on the basketball court and so on. Gaya (1991) opined that to avoid injuries, playing surfaces like fields, courts and pitches should be kept clean and safe in order to ensure that no injury occur due to unsafe facilities. He also went further to recommend the use of protective equipment to support or shield body parts which are at the risk of being injured, especially in contact sports.

From the result of the analysis on Table 2, most of the students were not interested in their course of study, i.e Physical Education, especially the practical aspect of it. This lack of interest led to absentmindedness, which could cause injuries for them.

The result of analysis on Table 3 indicated that apart from lack of interest, carelessness on the part of the students sometimes leads to some of these injuries. These findings agreed with the opinion of Shehu (1995) that behaviour of children on playgrounds can become a foundation on which conceptual ideas of safety in sports can be built. Shehu (1995) stated that the behaviour that could be discovered by a physical educator during practical classes included horse play, disobedience of rules, bypassing of basic procedure, fatigue, absentmindedness, fear, hesitation, ignorance, overconfidence, lack of warm-up collision, misuse of equipment, indiscipline, emotional instability, medical problem, lack of strength, and so on.

The result of the analysis on Table 4 indicated that lack of experience, good class organization and teaching methods of some of the lecturers often lead to injury during sports classes. Studies have shown that experience and good class organization are needed in handling students in practical classes (Agbonjimi, Okuneye, & Akeredolu, 1999; Shehu, 1995; Gaya, 1991). Bolalito, (1991) stated

that the coach / physical education teacher should have knowledge of injury in sport he/she is training or teaching. This is further supported by Shehu (1995) as he opined that the manner of preparing young athlete should be characterized by what Klaf and Artheneim (1981), referred to as progressive exercise or training load coupled with judicious acclimatization. Shehu (1995) stated further that coaches must learn to distinguish between over training and over loading and that training regimen for school children must conform to the principle of gradualness, specificity and routine as well as focusing on concomitant development of strength and flexibility as a means of producing greater endurance, speed and agility.

Conclusion

The findings of this study has revealed that injury in sports classes occurred due to so many factors which can still be catered for. Even, if occurrence of injury in sports is inevitable, it can still be reduced to make participation more interesting, entertaining and educative.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the researchers recommended as follows:

1. More basic sports facilities and protective sports equipment should be made available to the department of Physical and Health Education in adequate quantity and quality, by the college authorities via the assistance of the government.
2. Pre-sports class orientation should be given to the newly admitted students prior to any sport class. This is to equip them with the kind of behaviour that is expected from them during sports classes.
3. The lecturers should be advised to always use the appropriate methods that suit any class level they are going to handle or teach.

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