Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To analyze the profile of Brazilian physical therapists working with soccer and volleyball professional teams, by verifying their level of education (graduate or undergraduate), as well as their role and insertion within the interdisciplinary team.

METHODS: Structured questionnaires were administered to forty-nine physical therapists working at soccer, volleyball clubs and Brazilian national teams. These questionnaires provided data on social demographic, characteristics of the work environment and organization of clinical practice and its domains.

RESULTS: From the 49 participants in this study only five were female. Mean age of all participants was 32.2 years. The majority of the sports physical therapists had specialization degrees in different areas (78.2%), were hired through referral (78.2%), worked more than 8 hours a day or were exclusively dedicated to their clubs (80.0%) and earned seven to ten Brazilian minimal wages (58.2%). They reported to have participation in the domains of emergency care (87.3%), prevention (92.7%), functional rehabilitation (98.2%) and return to competition (100%). They had interdisciplinary relationships with physical educators during functional rehabilitation programs (70.9%) and with physicians in the decision process of return to activity after rehabilitation (74.5%) and on the veto of an athlete to take part in practices or matches (63.6%). Therapists also complained of threats to their professional autonomy, specially directed by the team's physician.

CONCLUSION: There is still a need to invest in continuing education of sports physical therapists with the objective to improve their educational level and to strengthen their professional autonomy.

Keywords

Physical therapy, sport, profession, rehabilitation, prevention, staff.