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Team Physician Misdiagnosis: Statistical Analysis.

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Purpose: Misdiagnosis is a relatively common occurrence of team physicians and even medical directors in both team and professional sports settings that independent chiropractors must address. **Method:** Retrospective analyses of elite and professional athlete patients (n=25) seen by three independent doctors of chiropractic in the sports chiropractic setting occurred after the patients had been evaluated by a team physician. **Results:** Analysis revealed that basic clinical and functional examination protocol had not been followed by previous physicians. By performing appropriate examination, the correct diagnosis and thereby the correct form of management were allowed to occur. The range of time from injury to correct diagnosis was 0.5 to 36 months. The mean time from injury to correct diagnosis was 8.9 months. Eighty-four percent of the misdiagnoses occurred secondary to insufficient clinical and functional examination. Thirty-two percent did not have indicated X-ray, and 48% did not have adequate radiological interpretation. Thirty-six percent of the cases never had a diagnosis rendered by the team physician. Thirty-six percent involved the upper extremity; 28% the lower extremity; 16% the trunk; and 12% were rectus abdominus tears. **Conclusion:** The independent sports chiropractor can face pressure and obstacles in evaluating and treating elite athletes after initial misdiagnosis has occurred.

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