

Student Injury Rates in Pathfit Courses in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Physical activity is a vital component of holistic student development in higher education, and courses such as Physical Activities Toward Health and Fitness (PATHFit) are designed to promote health, discipline, and resilience. While these programs provide significant benefits, they also carry inherent risks of injury, particularly when students' fitness levels vary and safety protocols are applied inconsistently. This study investigated student injury rates in PATHFit courses across three Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines: Parañaque City College (PCC), Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC), and Pangasinan State University-Bayambang Campus (PSU-BC), covering School Years 2021-2022 to 2025-2026. A descriptive quantitative design complemented by qualitative insights was employed. Data were collected through structured Google Form surveys administered to administrators, clinic staff, and PATHFit faculty members. Ethical considerations were observed, ensuring confidentiality and informed consent. The surveys captured information on injury frequency, types, severity, causes, and safety protocols. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, averages, and thematic coding, with graphical presentations planned to illustrate trends and comparisons across institutions. Results revealed that injury cases were generally low to moderate in frequency and predominantly minor in nature, including sprains, strains, and bruises, which were typically managed through first aid interventions. PCC recorded the lowest average injury rate (3.25 cases every school year), reflecting effective safety practices and manageable class conditions. ISPSC showed a moderate average (5.53 cases), but with inconsistencies in reporting between administrators, clinic, and teachers, highlighting gaps in documentation. PSU-BC reported the highest average injury rate (10.73 cases), due to its large student population and the scale of its PATHFit program. Across all institutions, faculty consistently reported higher numbers of injuries compared to administrators and clinics, suggesting that many minor incidents are managed at the classroom level and not formally documented. The study identified several contributing factors to injuries, including varying student fitness levels, inadequate warm-up practices, improper techniques, and differences in supervision and training conditions. These findings emphasize the need for structured safety measures, standardized reporting systems, and coordinated institutional practices to ensure student safety. Recommendations include establishing unified injury reporting systems, strengthening safety protocols, enhancing faculty training, improving facilities, promoting student preparedness, and implementing preventive conditioning programs. In conclusion, while PATHFit programs successfully promote wellness and physical engagement, the recurring occurrence of injuries underscores the importance of balancing physical activity with risk management. By addressing gaps in reporting and strengthening safety measures, HEIs can ensure that PATHFit courses remain both beneficial and safe, thereby fulfilling institutional, national, and global goals for education and health.

Keywords: Physical activity, Pathfit Courses, training conditions, supervision