



Human Development and Family Science  
University of Missouri

## Psychological Distress and Mental Health Service Use Among U.S. Domestic and International Student-Athletes

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### Objective and Method

Cultural background and athletic participation may influence how international and domestic students experience distress and use mental health services.

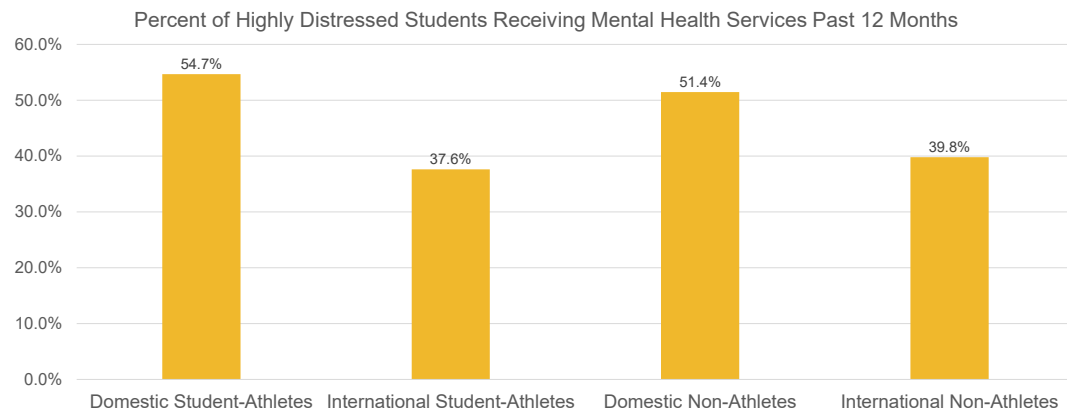
#### Study Goals:

- Compare the degree of psychological distress among U.S. domestic and international student-athletes.
- Compares mental health service use by U.S. domestic and international student-athletes who experience psychological distress.

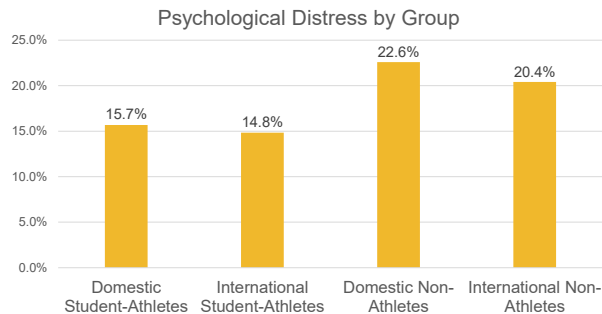
#### Data:

- Results from Spring National College Health Assessment 2020-2023.
- Number and percent of domestic and international (Visa) student athletes coded as meeting the criteria for “severe psychological distress” on the Kessler 6 inventory.
- Proportion of domestic and international (Visa) student-athletes with severe psychological distress who reported having received mental health services in past year.

### Percent of Students with Severe Psychological Distress Who Received Mental Support Services



### Percent Experiencing “Severe Psychological Distress”



### Results

- 15.7% of domestic student-athletes, and 14.8% of international student-athletes, met the Kessler 6 criteria for severe psychological distress, compared with 22.6% and 20.4% of domestic and international non-athletes.
- Among student-athletes experiencing severe psychological distress, international students were less likely to have received mental health services in the past year (37.6% of international students versus 54.7% of domestic students,  $X^2 [1, N = 1,954] = 24.01, p < .01$ ).
- Among the non-athlete students experiencing severe psychological distress, 51.4% of domestic students and 39.8% of international students reported receiving mental health services in the past year.
- Whereas the college student-athletes were less likely than other students to experience severe psychological distress (as measured by the Kessler 6 inventory), in those cases a small majority of domestic student-athletes (54.7%) reported receiving mental health services, compared with only 37.6% of international student-athletes.
- In this sample, student-athletes were less likely to experience Kessler 6 severe distress than non-athlete peers. International students (athlete and non-athlete) experiencing severe distress were less likely to have received mental health services than domestic students.

### Selected References

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