

# The Growing Influence of Female Athletic Training Scholars

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The *Journal of Athletic Training* welcomes this opportunity to highlight the research of women scholars in athletic training. Women entered the profession and became certified as early as 1971, yet it was not until 15 years later that women scholars in athletic training began to emerge. Although it was difficult for us to do an exhaustive search of available records, from what we could find, the earliest research by female athletic training scholars was published in 1986. This was shortly before an article entitled "Research in Athletic Training: The Missing Ingredient" appeared in the fall 1988 issue of the *Journal* ([http://www.athletictraininghistory.com/nata/journals/NATA\\_Journal\\_VOL\\_23\\_03\\_1988%20sm.pdf](http://www.athletictraininghistory.com/nata/journals/NATA_Journal_VOL_23_03_1988%20sm.pdf)); the article noted the need for scientific inquiry to play a greater role if athletic training was to be recognized as a true allied health profession. In response, the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) formed the Research and Education Foundation in 1991, which quickly began awarding grants to stimulate research by athletic training scholars in areas related to athletic training practice. We were pleased to find that women were among those early research grant recipients, pursuing topics such as "Effects of Various Treatment Techniques on the Signs and Symptoms of Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness" (Dawn Gulick, PhD, PT, ATC) and "Muscle Performance and Functional Outcome After ACL Injury" (Lynn Snyder-Mackler, ScD, PT, ATC).

Even though women scholars have been present since the emergence of athletic training research, it has really been in the last 20 years that the number of women scholars and the influence of their research on athletic training practice have accelerated.

This special issue highlights the contributions of more than 40 female athletic training scholars. These authors range from seasoned scholars to junior faculty and even include individuals still in training, with almost all authors having completed their doctoral degrees in the last 20 years. The number of young scholars (approximately 50% of whom are still in training or received their doctorate in the last 5 years) publishing in this issue demonstrates the potential importance of what is yet to come.

This issue provides an opportunity to bring attention to both the quality and variety of their expertise in content

areas and research methodologies. The articles include work in 4 of the 5 research priority areas in the Athletic Training Research Agenda (<https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/athletic-training-research-agenda-infographic-handout.pdf>).

Studies of health care competency address trends in return to play after concussion, concussion education and care-seeking behaviors, athlete-workload monitoring, and external biofeedback for chronic ankle injury rehabilitation. Investigations related to the vitality of the profession address work-family guilt, mentoring newly certified athletic trainers (ATs), and ATs' preparedness to provide transgender patient care. An evaluation of documentation practices among ATs in the physician-practice setting focuses on health information technology, and an examination of the doctor of athletic training degree reflects the health profession's educational priority. The effects of these studies and priority areas on what is taught and practiced in athletic training are far reaching and have the potential to shape athletic training practice and education into the future.

Still, the articles presented here represent only a small fraction of the women scholars in our profession and their achievements over the last 35 years. Despite these many contributions, women tend to be underrepresented in terms of recognition of their scholarship. Only 39% of the published NATA position statements had women as lead authors, and an even smaller percentage of women have been recognized through the NATA Foundation Research Awards program. To date, only 1 woman has earned the highest honor (ie, Medal for Distinguished Athletic Training). However, 19% of the New Investigator Award recipients and 26% of the David H. Perrin Dissertation Award winners have been women, demonstrating an encouraging trend toward greater recognition of worthy female scholars. We hope that this recognition will continue to grow along with the increase in the number of women scholars publishing in our field. Our goal for this issue was to enhance awareness of the quality and quantity of research that women are contributing to the field. Given the number of young scholars represented in this issue, we are excited to see what the future holds.

Editor's note. Sandra J. Shultz, PhD, ATC, is a JAT senior associate editor and a professor in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Tamara C. Valovich McLeod, PhD, ATC, is a JAT senior associate editor and a professor in the Department of Athletic Training at A.T. Still University, Mesa, AZ. Drs Shultz and Valovich McLeod served as editors-in-chief for the articles in this special issue.