

5-2015

The dangers of the 'no pain, no gain' mentality in modern exercise.

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Recommended Citation

Costa, Allison B., "The dangers of the 'no pain, no gain' mentality in modern exercise." (2015). *Senior Honors Projects*. Paper 413.

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The dangers of the “no pain, no gain” exercise mentality.

Allison Costa

Figure 1: Shows an anatomically correct image of the most commonly injured joints in the body

Introduction

With the pressure to be fit in today's society the “no pain, no gain” exercise mentality has become a dangerous mindset among the average gym-goer and the collegiate athlete. Studies assessing sports injuries in college-aged students in the United States indicate that the levels of sports injuries are rising. About 30% of all those injuries are a result of overuse (2015). Daily exercise can make a person both physically and mentally healthier. The motivation one gets from a good work out, or hitting a personal goal within their sport can be addicting. The addiction causes a person to work past their personal limits, leading to potential acute and/or chronic injuries.

Objective: To determine the top three injuries among University of Rhode Island students and basketball players who push their bodies physically past what is safe in order to achieve their fitness goals. As well as to determine if sports injury and the “no pain, no gain” mentality is different for those who play an organized sport such as basketball or those who just work out on their own.

Hypothesis: Those who have the “no pain, no gain” exercise mentality are more likely to put their bodies at risk both physically and mentally. The no pain no gain mentality is more common in athletes than the average gym-goer.

Methods

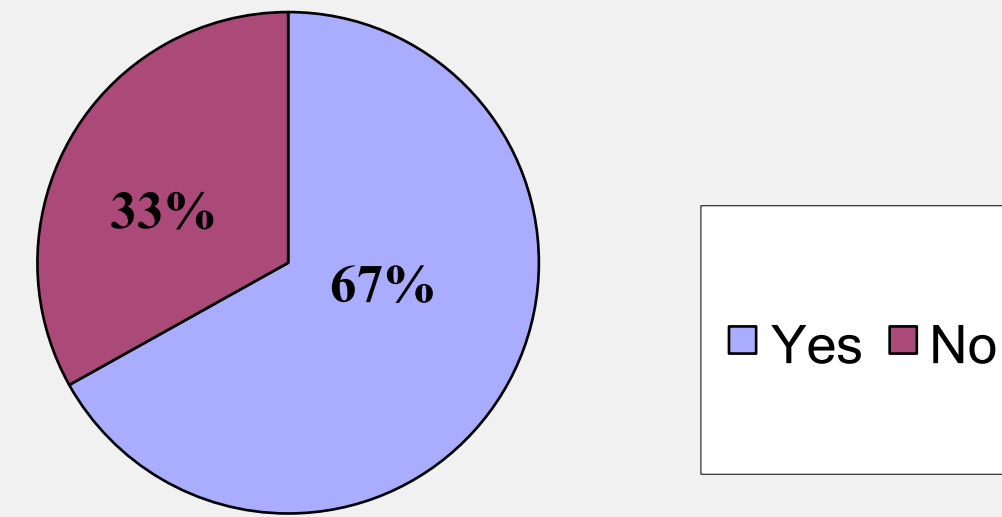
Two surveys were conducted via surveymonkey.com. One which collected data from 162 gym goers at the University of Rhode Island and the other which collected data from 13 university men and women's basketball team members. The surveys contained an average of 45 multiple choice and short answer questions that covered topics such as; demographics, stretching and resting habits. The surveys also looked into the types of injuries the participants have had throughout their life time. The top injuries were determined by this survey.

Additionally, findings were expanded upon by attending an Injured Athletes Anonymous support group at URI. The “no pain, no gain” mentality was confirmed by the many athletes who attended this support group who suffer from overuse injuries.

Interviews were held with injured athletes and students as well as their doctors to learn about the injured students struggle both physically and emotionally with their sports injury.

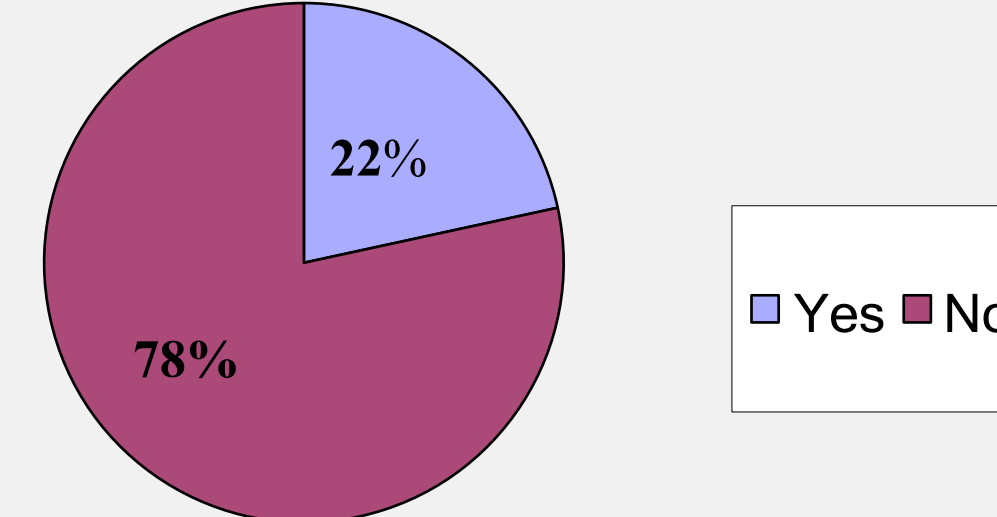
Data & Results

Have you ever experienced an acute sports injury?



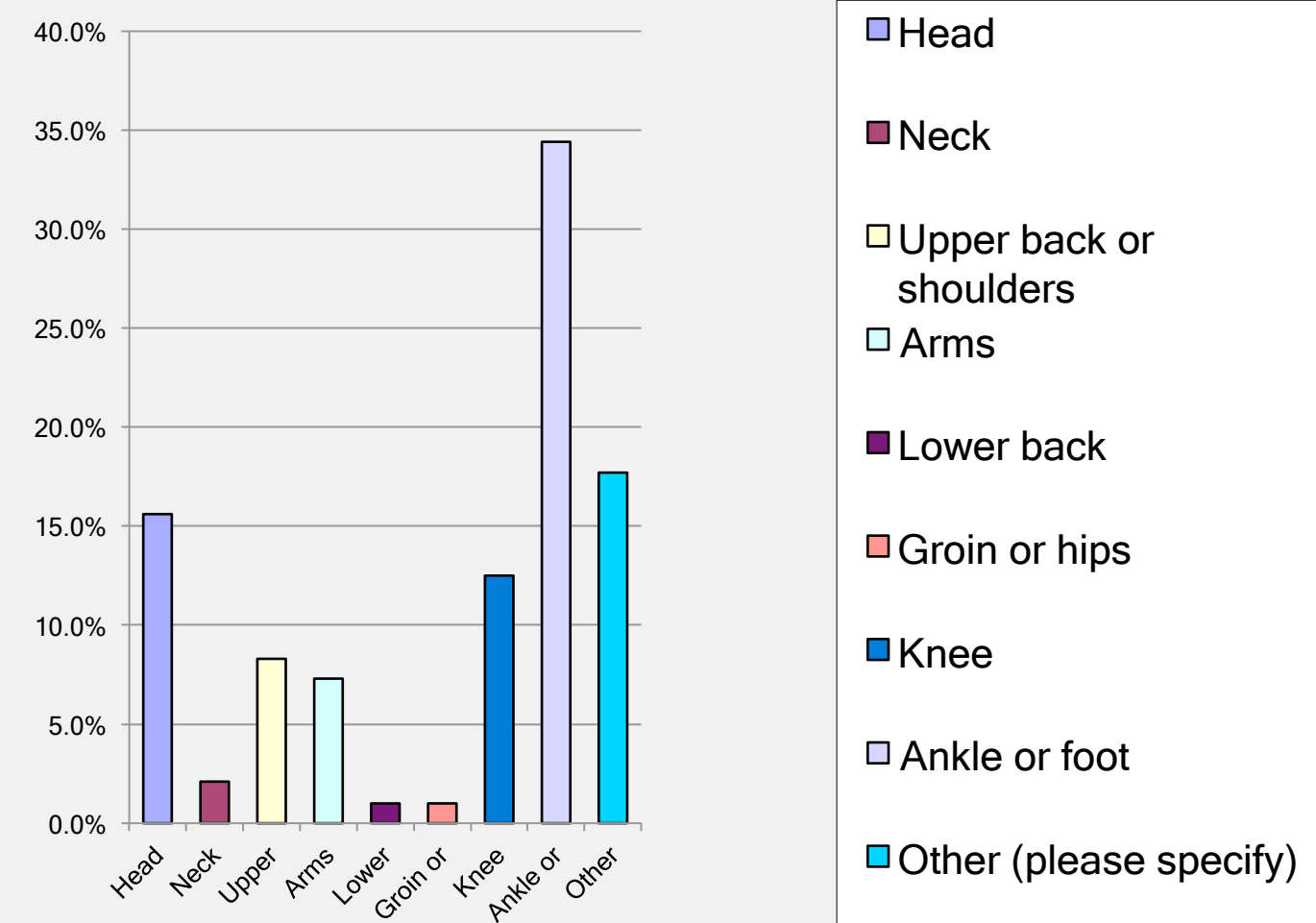
Graph 3: Question 26 on the gym-goers survey looks at which participants has an acute sports injury. (Acute injuries can include but are not limited to: cuts, sprains, head injuries, broken bones or fractures).

Have you experienced a chronic sports injury?

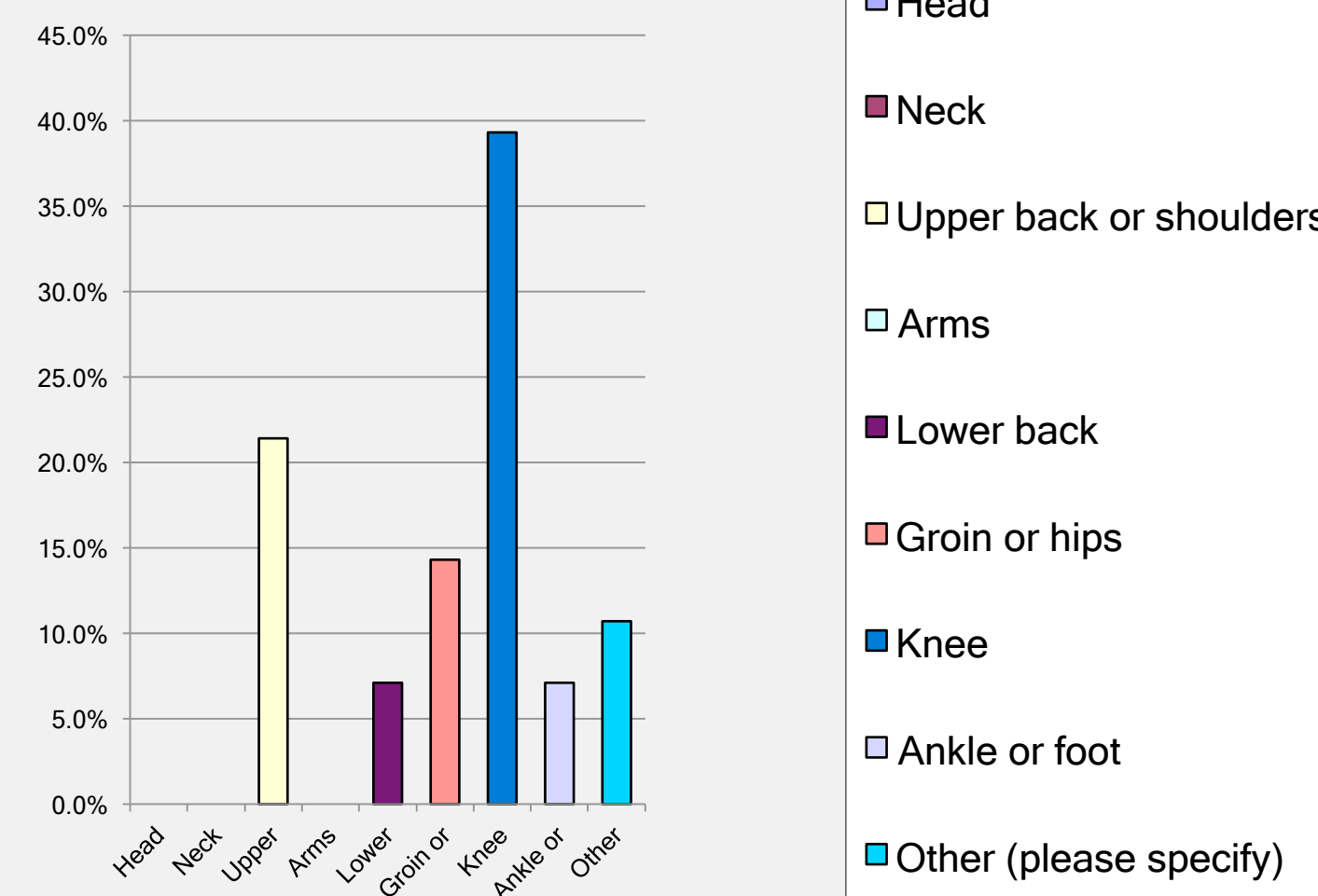


Graph 4: Question 27 of the gym-goers survey looks at which participants have ever had a chronic sports injury. (Chronic injuries are injuries due to repeated use to the same muscle group).

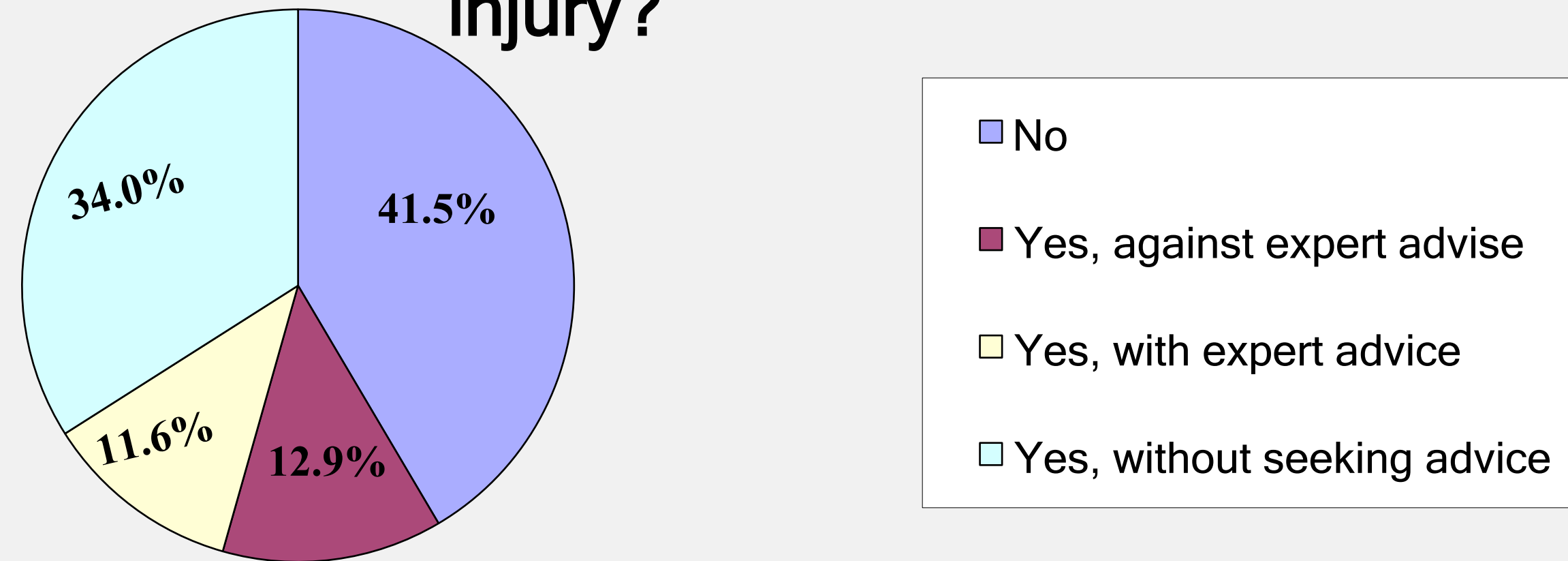
What part of your body was affected by the acute injury?



What part of your body was affected by the chronic injury?



Have you ever continued to train or compete despite injury?



Graph 7: Question 23 of the gym-goers survey shows how many participants have the “no pain, no gain,” mentality and workout through their injury.

Top Sports Injuries

Gym-goer

- 1) Strained knee
- 2) Sprained ankle
- 3) Concussion

Basketball Player

- 1) Sprained ankle
- 2) Fractured feet
- 3) Knee injuries



Figures 3a: shows an injured soccer player. Figure 3b: shows three types of common overuse injuries that can occur to the knee.



Figures 4a: shows what type of motion it takes for an ankle to roll and become sprained and which bones and ligaments are affected. Figure 4b: Shows a basketball player down on the ground with an ankle sprain.

Long term physical and mental effects of sports injuries.



Figure 5a: Muhammad Ali, a famous boxer who has suffered multiple concussions throughout his boxing career and is now suffering from Parkinson's Disease. Figure 5b: this image shows the motion of the head and the brain that causes concussions. The brain crashes against the skull injuring itself, leading to the concussion.

Discussion

One hundred percent of the basketball players who participated in the survey stated that they have pushed through their injury to continue their sport; while only 23% of the average gym goer pushed through their injury to continue their workout. The study results confirm that the “no pain no gain” mentality does affect all athletes, physically and mentally, when it comes to pushing their bodies past what they are capable of. The average gym goer, although not as prevalent to the mentality, feels pressure from themselves and their peers to keep up their physical appearance. More commonly, the collegiate athletes feel pressure to keep their commitment to their sport and their coaches. The pressure to succeed as a drafted collegiate athlete often overrides the attention and time needed to heal an injury, while the focus is on winning instead of long term quality of life. The “no pain, no gain” mentality was confirmed by the many athletes who attend the Injured Athletes Anonymous support group who suffer from overuse injuries. Further research needs to be focused on the long-term physical and mental debilitating effects of these injuries on the athlete and its effect on their quality of life.

Acknowledgments

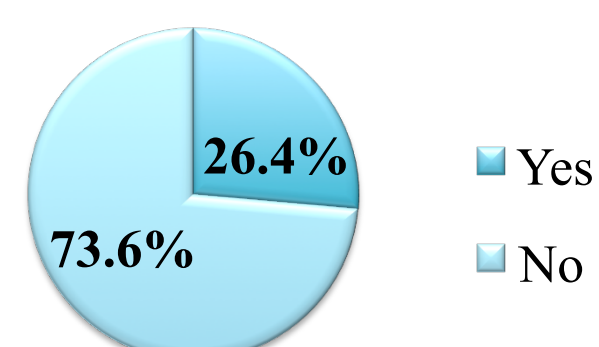
Thank you to Sheila Mitchell from the University of Rhode Islands' Health Services. As well as URI's athletics program, and the URI students and athletes who participated in the “No pain, no gain” exercise mentality survey.

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Cody, J. (2012, April 12). Campus health and sports. Retrieved April 8th 2015, from <http://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2012/nearly-30-of-all-college-athlete-injuries-a-result-of/>
 Mancini, N. (2013, January 9). Brain injuries, concussions affect boxers in later years- The News Outlet. Retrieved April 9, 2015 from <http://www.thenewsoutlet.org/2013/01/brain-injuries-concussions-affect-boxers-in-later-years/>



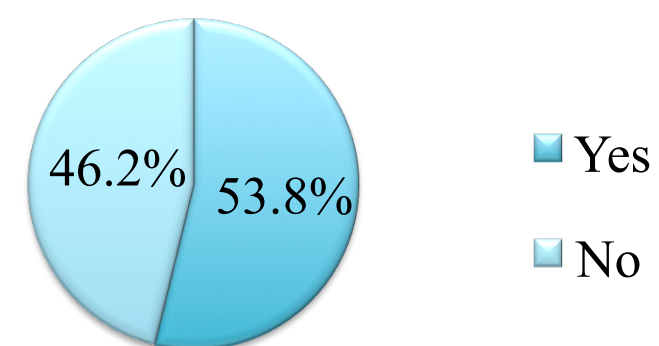
Are you currently experiencing any pain due to work out related injury?



Graph 1: Question 20 from gym goers survey, looking at who is currently experiencing pain from a sports injury.



Are you currently experiencing any pain due to a basketball related injury?

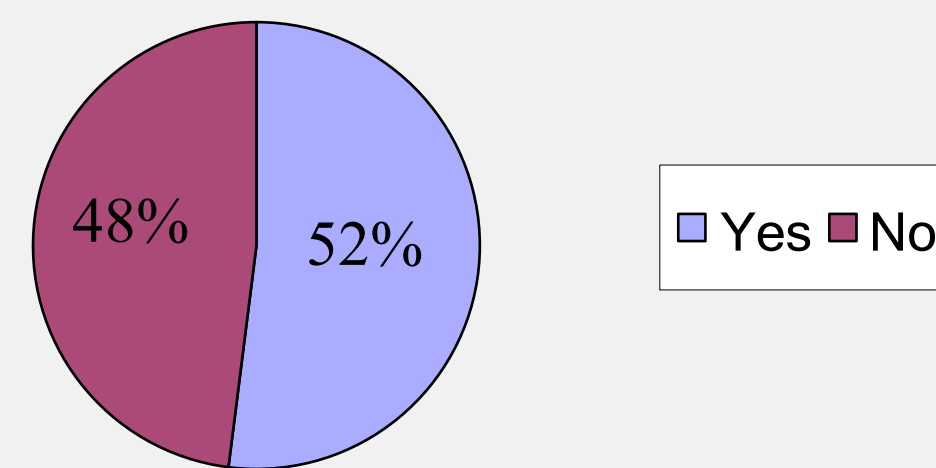


Graph 2: Question number 16 on the URI-Basketball survey, looking at which members of the Basketball teams are currently experiencing pain.

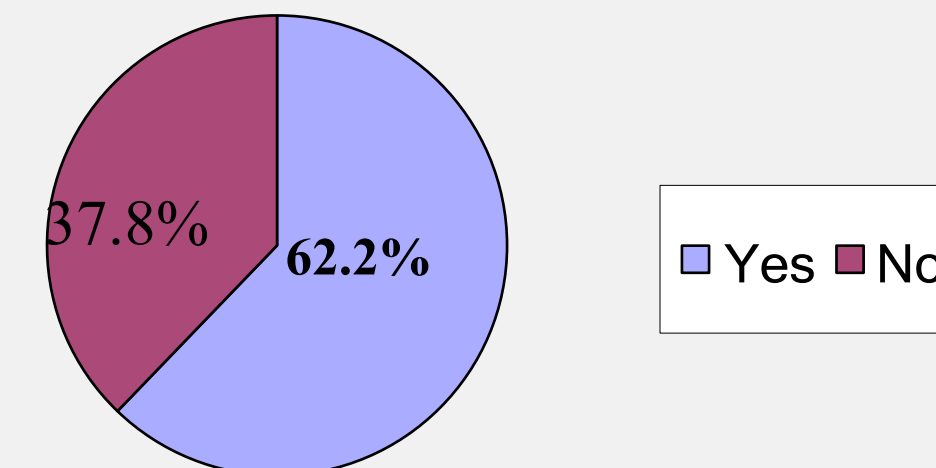


Figure 2a: URI gym-goers Figures 2b and 2c: URI men and women basketball team members on the court.

Have you ever used anti-inflammatories to reduce pain of your injury and then continue to workout afterwards?



Have you ever used ice or heat to reduce your pain and then continue to workout afterwards?



Graphs 8 & 9: show two types of ways athletes and gym-goers subside the affects of their injuries in order to continue training and working out.