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Cost Benefit Analysis of Athletic Team Coverage by an Orthopaedic Practice

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INTRODUCTION

- Coverage of high school football by an orthopaedic practice is considered standard of care in many localities.
- Taking time away from an orthopaedic practice to provide on-field athletic care has potential advantages and disadvantages.
- To this date, the economic value of this endeavor has never been investigated.
- Purpose: to perform a cost/benefit analysis of local high school sports coverage by an orthopaedic sports medicine practice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- From January 2010 to June 2012, a prospective injury report database was established containing all sports injuries from five high school athletic programs covered by a single orthopaedic sports medicine practice.
- Patients referred for orthopaedic care were then tracked (Table 1) to determine potential revenue.

RESULTS

- Evaluation and management codes and current procedure terminology (CPT) codes were used to determine the standardized Medicare reimbursement rates of:
  - Office visits
  - Surgical treatment
  - Calculations using both national average and regional Medicare reimbursement rates are shown.

- Direct Cost of coverage was estimated based on:
  - Physician time required for team coverage
  - Hourly reimbursement rates for orthopaedic surgeons
  - Previously reported data (Leigh at al).

- Using the team coverage cost from Table 3 as the overhead in our analysis, we determined:
  - The profit of the covering physician to be $13,598.33 (total revenue of covering physician ($26,226.14) – overhead ($12,627.81)).
  - The total potential orthopaedic profit to be $31,612.13 (total orthopaedic revenue ($44,239.94) – overhead ($12,627.81)).

DISCUSSION

- The adjusted hourly reimbursement rate based on actual profit ($116.23), was slightly above the average per-hour reimbursement of an orthopaedic surgeon determine in a previous study by Leigh et al ($107.93).
- Coverage of high school football games is either cost-neutral or profitable.
- The total profit made by the covering sports practice ($13,598.33) represented 43% of the total potential profit.
- Significant improvement can be made in the capture rate of this patient pool.
- A potentially profitable and personally beneficial engagement with local athletes can lead to a symbiotic relationship between physicians and their local communities.

REFERENCES