

# Self-Reported Injuries and Illnesses in DIII Marching Band Members



Rita Acosta, Reba Rortvedt, Katie Ruhde | Dr. Saori Braun, Dr. Robert Stow | Department of Kinesiology

## INTRODUCTION

Marching band is a continuously growing event. With approximately 502 members, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Bugold Marching Band (BMB) holds almost as many students as university athletics, which has 686 athletes. Marching is a demanding activity and holds practices at a similar intensity level to that of sports teams. A significant difference is that with marching band not being included in athletics, there are not regulations on practice times nor is there medical staff accessible to the band. This means that while football wouldn't practice due to the heat, marching band still holds practice, which could result in injuries such as severe dehydration or even heat stroke.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

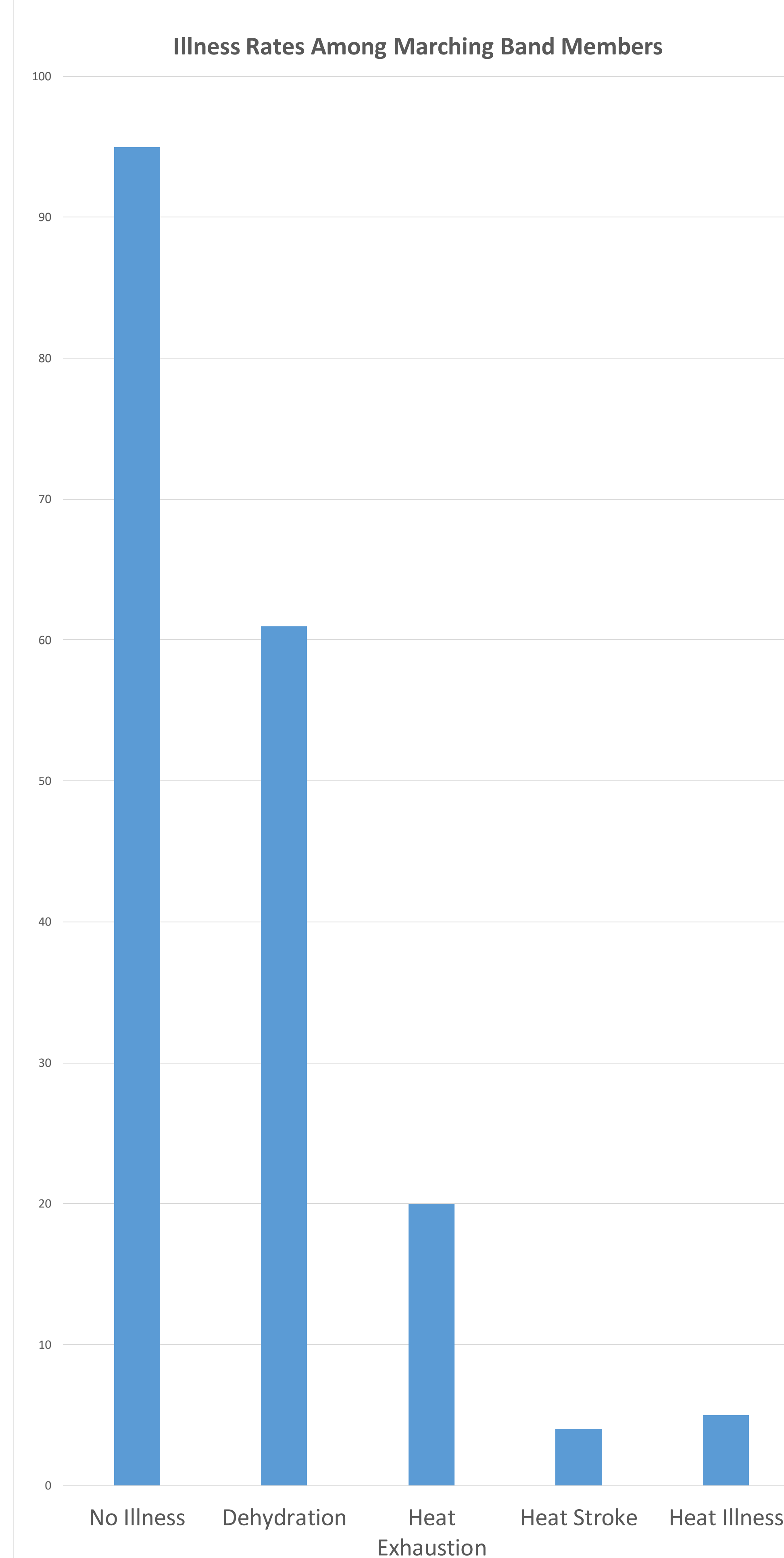
The purpose of this study was to gauge self-reported injury and illness rates among a marching band. It was also designed to figure whether there was a significant correlation between injury rates among band members how often they occur vs injury rates among athletes.

## METHODS

We sent a survey to the entire Bugold Marching Band. The survey included questions asking about age, experience in marching band and asked for them to self report on injuries and illnesses that they felt were directly caused by marching activities in addition to asking them how often they exercise outside of band. They were also asked what their role in the marching band was, in order to get an idea on what kind of instruments were used by those who responded. Based on these answers, period prevalence, injury risk, injury and illness rate were then calculated and compared on a bar graph.

## PARTICIPANTS

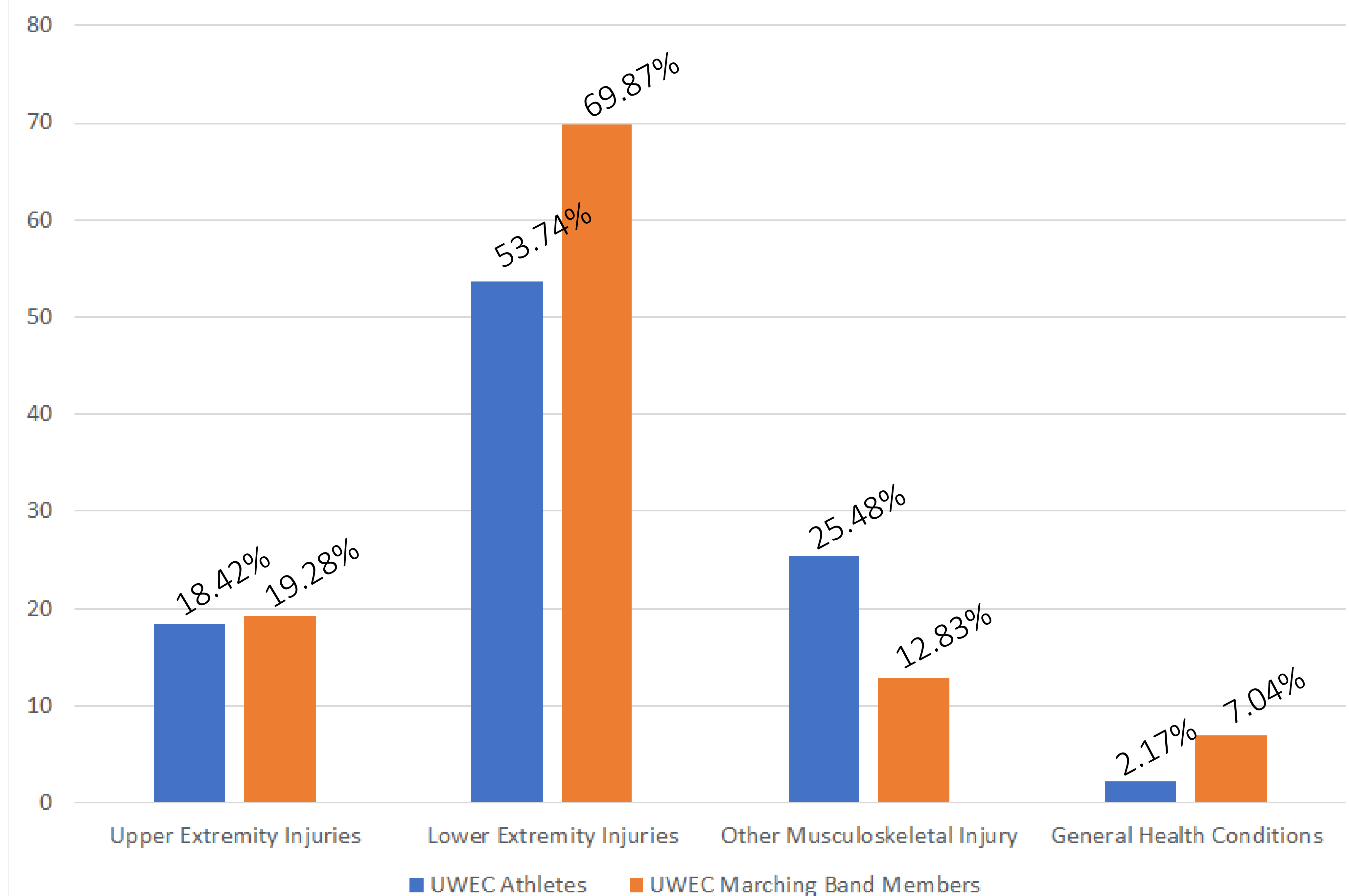
A total of 183 responses were used. The section makeup was 23% woodwinds, 43% brass, and 44% drumline. 28 members were excluded from our data. Exclusion factors were non-instrument band members (color guard and dance team), and those who did not sign a consent to participation waiver.



## COVID-19 IMPACT

Our original study design included a functional fitness assessment. We wanted to use this as a comparison point to better understand the relationship between marching band members and traditional athletes. Due to COVID-19, however, we were not able to conduct any in-person assessments and had to solely assess the information we got from the survey. For this reason, our study turned more into exploring general thoughts on injury and illness in marching band.

## Injury & Illness Percentage Rates Among UWEC Athletes and UWEC Marching Band Members



## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

Between the UWEC athletes and band members, we found similar patterns in injury breakdowns, with the majority of injuries being located in the lower body. We found that athletes suffered from more generalized musculoskeletal injuries, while marching band members suffered more from general health illnesses.

### DISCUSSION

In our research we were not able to get the data we wanted, to use to compare marching members to traditional athletes, due to COVID-19. We were able to, however, break down the types of injuries received by the different groups and compare this. Some factors that could lead to inaccurate data are that the marching band members self reported injuries and illnesses. This could have led to inaccurate representation of injuries. Additionally, in injury reports for athletes, many are listed as generic sprain, sprain, etc. Therefore, we were unable to differentiate locations of those injuries. Furthermore, marching band members reported a high incidence of heat illnesses. Of the 50 medical illnesses reported, 42 of those were reported as heat illnesses. This is 27.32% of participants. Heat illnesses among athletes were not reported. Thus, we did not include this data in the above graph.

### FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

We hope our study creates a foundation to continue looking at marching band members and conduct follow up research in order to be an advocate for the addition of medical coverage for marching practices. At the very least we hope that by assessing injury and illness, steps can be taken to lower the risk and work on prevention factors for the band. We also hope that it highlighted the correlation of prevention factors and what band members can do now in order to prevent serious illness while they are without medical coverage.