

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY  
COUNSELING, HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER  
SICKLE CELL TRAIT AND ATHLETES

On June 25, 2009 the NCAA adopted the recommendation that athletic departments confirm Sickle Cell trait status in all student athletes, if it is not already known, during their required medical examinations.

Sickle Cell Trait is the inheritance of one gene for sickle hemoglobin and one for normal hemoglobin. During intense or extensive exertion, the sickle hemoglobin can change the shape of red blood cells from round to quarter-moon, or "sickle". This change, also called exertional sickling, can pose a serious risk for some athletes.

The sickle gene is common in people whose origin is from areas where malaria is widespread. Over the millennia, carrying one sickle gene fended off death to malaria, leaving 1 in 12 African-Americans with sickle cell trait. The sickle gene is also present in those of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Indian, Caribbean, and South and Central American ancestry.

In the past several years, exertional sickling has killed young athletes. Participation in athletics is allowed as long as proper precautions are followed to prevent such instances from occurring.

All 50 states screen for Sickle Cell Trait at birth and the information should be available to you by your physician as part of your health information. If you are unsure if you were tested, or if you do not know the results of the test, please contact your physician prior to answering the following questions.

Name (please print)\_\_\_\_\_Sport\_\_\_\_\_

Student ID# (855)\_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the correct response.

YES NO Have you ever been tested for Sickle Cell Trait that you are aware of?

Date\_\_\_\_\_Results\_\_\_\_\_

YES NO Have you ever been advised that you carry the Sickle Cell Trait or have Sickle Anemia?

If yes, Please Describe\_\_\_\_\_

YES NO Do any members of your family carry the Sickle Cell Trait or have a Sickle Cell Anemia?

If yes, please describe\_\_\_\_\_