

Nutritional Knowledge and Athletic Performance

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Introduction

There are many factors that contribute to an athlete's optimal performance level. These factors include the frequency of training regimens, body composition, injuries, environmental conditions, and necessary equipment. One factor contributing to athletic performance is the nutritional habits of the athlete. There have been recent studies conducted regarding how nutrition affects elite athletes at the professional level, specifically regarding endurance athletes, but little has been done regarding Division III collegiate men's volleyball athletes. Therefore, the following question is proposed, what is the correlation between nutritional knowledge and athletic performance?

Methods

The literature analyzed included articles from 1990 to 2020, which consisted of systematic reviews of proper nutrition, the athletic gut microbiota, nutrition knowledge questionnaires and their development, studies of nutrition and elite athletes, a study regarding Division III football athletes, perceived protein needs, and a study regarding the production of a sports-nutrition questionnaire. The articles were found using keywords such as "athletes and nutrition," "collegiate athletes and nutrition," and "periodized nutrition and athletics". These fifteen articles were analyzed and collected from PubMed.

Results

Based on the analysis of the articles, understanding the definition of "proper sports nutrition" is essential in helping athletes make decisions regarding their nutritional intake. Most of the literature regarding athletes and nutrition describes the best guidelines for fueling an athlete's body and why specific macronutrient breakdowns benefit athletes playing particular sports. Research is recommended for determining whether or not prior nutritional knowledge affects an athlete's performance. From the information gathered from these articles, the question above is not answered fully, but some inferences can be drawn. Since Carthage College is also a Division III school similar in size to the school mentioned in one of the studies, there will likely be similar findings regarding where the athletes gather their nutritional information, as well as similar levels of nutritional education. With the condensed version of the General Nutritional Knowledge Questionnaire, it will be less challenging to formulate a proper means of questioning the participants' nutritional knowledge in future studies, which will help researchers better understand actual dietary knowledge.



Conclusions and Future Directions

The literature review did not provide convincing evidence to support or refute the question as to whether or not having proper nutritional knowledge affects athletic performance. Because of this, research regarding the nutritional knowledge and whether or not there is a correlation with enhanced athletic performance should be conducted.

References

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