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Knowledge, attitudes and practices on sports nutrition, body composition and associated factors among national level athletes in Sri Lanka

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Introduction & Aim: This study evaluates the practices on sports nutrition, body composition and associated factors among national level athletes in Sri Lanka.

Method: Cross sectional study was carried out among 178 national level athletes aged 18-35 years representing karate, swimming, wrestling, volleyball, weight lifting (indoor) netball, rugby, track and field athletes (outdoor). Self-administered questionnaire obtained data on knowledge, attitude and practices on dietary pattern, hydration and supplements. Body composition (body mass index and body fat percentage) was determined using stadiometer, weighing scale and body impedance analyzer.

Results: Practices were poor; consuming fast food (88.8%), missing meals (56.8%), improper meal timing (65.3%) and inadequate hydration during practices (73.8%). Majority (53.4%) had recommended BMI, however only 15.3% had recommended body fat. Majority (60.1%) had adequate overall knowledge on sports nutrition. Knowledge within subcategories varied, where most were of satisfactory knowledge with regard to dietary intake (59.6%) and supplements (55.6%), but not hydration (35.4%). Overall attitudes were positive (58.4%). Compared to outdoor sports, indoor sports significantly associated with improper timing of meals (indoor 65.6%, outdoor 40.6%; $p < 0.01$), missing meals (indoor 64%, outdoor 40%; $p < 0.01$), adequate hydration (indoor 66.3%, outdoor 84.3%; $p < 0.01$) and less supplement consumption (indoor 68.9%, outdoor 48%; $p < 0.01$). Compared to females, males had improper meal timing (males 62.7%, females 42.6%; $p < 0.05$), adequate hydration (males 32.1%, females 16.1%; $p < 0.05$) and recommended body fat percentage (males 19.4%, females 7.8%; $p < 0.05$). Less experienced athletes had adequate BMI (less 63.6%, more 44.4%; $p < 0.05$) but consumed more energy drinks (less 70.3%, more 38.8%; $p < 0.01$). Athletes with higher education level (47.3%) consumed supplements compared to lower educational level (32.3%; $p < 0.05$). Knowledge was not associated with any practices.

Biography

Wijerathne is currently pursuing his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree from University of Colombo. He is the Captain of the Karate team of University of Colombo. He studied three martial arts; Karate, Wing Chun and Taekwondo.

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