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Dietary supplement usage of athletes in a South Asian regional country; Sri Lanka

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Objective: Identification of dietary habits and dietary supplement usage pattern among Sri Lankan athletes.

Methods: Sri Lankan elite athletes (386) above 18 years old, who belong to 14 sports, were randomly selected for survey study. Data was collected through self-administered structured questionnaire.

Results: Dietary supplements are being used by 90% of them, mainly including multivitamins (62.5%), protein (47.4%), creatine (19.0%), rehydration fluids (54.5%) being weight gainers (1.1%) the lowest. Players in all 14 sports showed more than 75% dietary supplement usage while badminton, shooting, wrestling, netball and rugby showed significantly higher usage than karate which has the lowest usage. Supplement usage pattern was observed within geographical variation where six provinces showed more than 90% usage compared to all nine. A significant increase in supplement usage was observed in athletes between 21-35 ages. No significant difference was observed in the supplement usage pattern respect to marital status, gender, occupation of the athletes or highest level of participation. All the participants take carbohydrate rich diet for lunch and 13% cereal for breakfast and 4.2% vegetable and meat rich diet for both breakfast and dinner. Among them 10.9% consumes junk food for dinner. From these players 81.9% using fruits, 54.9% using porridge, 43% using soup and 22.8% using drinks made from medicinal plants show similar tendency in using dietary supplements (more than 90%). Among vegetarians (3.6%) the supplement usage is 85.7% which includes 57.1% protein supplements.

Conclusion: While dietary supplement usage is high among Sri Lankan athletes irrespective of sport, dietary habits and social status, their dietary practice needs a change.

Biography

Punchividanelage Nilu Jayashika Fernando has completed her BSc in Chemistry at University of Sri Jayewardenepura and Postgraduate Diploma in Analytical Chemistry at the University Of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is a Research Officer at Sri Lanka Anti-Doping Agency. Her research interests include anti-doping science research in the field of sports.

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