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An energy balance and cope intervention for division I female athletes

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Background & Purpose: Female athletes struggle harder than males to lose body fat and maintain a leaner physique. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of an educational and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) based intervention on knowledge, body composition, anxiety, stress, and nutritional intake.

Methods: A randomized controlled trial was conducted with 153 female athletes from the United States Air Force Academy. Participants were assigned to one of three groups: (a) combined energy balance and CBT-based intervention (E1); (b) CBT- based intervention alone (E2); and (c) control group (C). Main outcomes included a dual energy X-ray (DXA) Scan for body composition, a knowledge test, GAD-7 for anxiety, BIPS for stress, and a 24 hour food recall.

Findings: Significant improvement on knowledge of energy balance occurred in both experimental groups 1 and 2 ($p < .001$). Significant reductions in % body fat occurred in both experimental groups ($p < .001$). The control group only demonstrated a significant increase in stress as measured by the BIPS ($p < .01$).

Conclusions: A combined energy balance and CBT-based intervention improves knowledge and body fat. It is important to assess knowledge, anxiety, stress, nutrition intake, % body fat in female athletes and deliver evidence-based interventions to improve their health outcomes.

Biography

Brenda C Buffington completed her BS at the University of Pittsburgh, M S in Exercise Physiology at West Virginia University and her doctoral degree in Higher Education; Leadership and Instruction from Argosy University. She was the Assistant Director of the Human Performance Laboratory at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. For the past two years, she has been the Co-Director and a Professor of Health & Wellness Innovation in Healthcare in the College of Nursing at The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH.

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