

COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UCO NUTRITION PROGRAM AND ATHLETICS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY HABITS IN STUDENT ATHLETES

A POSTER PRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Nutrition is a very important component of an athlete's training and performance. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' position on this issue is that physical activity, athletic performance, and recovery are enhanced by optimal nutrition (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics et al., 2016). Although diet and nutrition are significant aspects of athletes' training and performance, there may not be an easily accessible qualified person for athletes to seek out for advice. Oftentimes, athletes rely on a coach or the internet for nutrition information. Some coaches may have limited knowledge of the basics of nutrition. A systematic review that was conducted by Heaney et al. (2011), found that athletes may have a higher or equal to knowledge base of nutrition when compared to non-athletes, but were lower when compared to nutrition students. With this lack of knowledge, athletes may not be getting sufficient macro/micronutrient intake when their bodies are needing to perform and recover from sports performance/training. The purpose of this STRL project was to increase knowledge, awareness, and to provide resources about proper food/beverage choices and nutritional practices for performance, recovery, and overall health to the football athletes. Throughout the year, the goal was to provide the athletes valuable knowledge, but also encourage active participation through activities such as healthy breakfast options for summer practice, grocery store tours, and discussion on the importance of BMR and body composition, and nutrition education. Due to the success of the project with the football team, it was continued for a second year and expanded to all student-athletes through a UCO Intern position. Based on expected outcomes during the second year, it is anticipated this will be an on-going collaboration between nutrition students and student-athletes that will benefit both groups through this transformative learning experience.

SELECT REFERENCES

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American College of Sports Medicine, & Dieticians of Canada (2016). Nutrition and athletic performance. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 116(3), 501-528.

Heaney, Susan, et al. (2011). Nutrition knowledge in athletes: a systematic review. *International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism*, 21(3), 248-261.

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