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MacKenzie, Kristen; Gallegos, Danielle; Ng, C

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Title: A tale of confusion and misinformation – the evaluation of protein supplementation practices, knowledge and beliefs in recreational adult athletes.


Workcenter: 1Bond University, Gold Coast, AUSTRALIA. 2Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, AUSTRALIA.

Introduction: There are clear recommendations for protein intake around resistance exercise to promote muscle protein synthesis. However, evidence-based information relating to protein intake and supplementation is plausibly limited to some athlete populations including those within recreational sporting clubs and gyms.

Methods: • 46 athletes (sprint, triathlon, field-based team sports, strength, power sports and weight-making sports) completed a pilot questionnaire. • Athlete protein intake frequency, amount, knowledge and beliefs regarding protein supplements were evaluated.

Results: • 48% of athletes reported the regular use of protein supplements. • 91% consumed a protein supplement immediately after resistance exercise. • The main reported reasons for protein supplement consumption were to aid recovery (54%), for weight gain/ muscle gain (48%), to improve strength (33%) and improve performance (31%). • 38% of the athletes were using protein supplements based on their coach’s advice in comparison to 10% based on advice from a dietitian or nutritionist. • Their protein supplements were purchased from their local health food store (26%), followed by at a pharmacy (22%), online (22%) and from a personal/team trainer (15%).

Conclusions, discussion and practical application • 38% nominated strongly agree/agree versus 59% strongly disagree/ disagree that their current diet is insufficient in protein if they don’t supplement protein. • 40% nominated strongly agree/agree versus 36% strongly disagree/ disagree that there would be a negative effect of consuming too much protein on performance. • 58% nominated strongly agree/agree versus 36% strongly disagree/ disagree that there would be a negative effect of consuming too much protein on health.

On average, how many days do you supplement protein per week?

- 1-2 x: 45%
- 3-4 x: 23%
- 5-6 x: 23%
- everyday: 9%

On average, what do you consume as a protein dose per serve?

- 10g: 27%
- 20g: 9%
- 30g: 9%
- 40g: 5%
- >40g: 5%
- Don't know: 0%

On the days you take protein supplements, on average how many times a day do you take them?

- 1 x: 41%
- 2 - 3 x: 59%