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Prevalence of chronic conditions, treatment strategies and sources of nutrition information used by masters games participants

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Background: Masters athletes (MA) may have medical conditions that influence recommendations for optimising health and performance. This study examined prevalence of chronic conditions, treatment strategies and sources of nutrition information used by MA.

Method: MA competing at two Australian Masters Games competitions (2017, 2018) were invited to complete an online survey. Prevalence of chronic conditions was compared to Australian Health Survey data using Chi-square Goodness of Fit or Fisher's Exact Test. Scores for 14 nutrition information sources were calculated by multiplying response number for each source by rank (1-5, ordered by importance).

Results: In total, 817 participants (53.7±10.6y, 60.8% female) responded. The prevalence of most chronic conditions was lower in Australian MA versus the general population (asthma, hypertension, hyperlipidaemia, type 2 diabetes, cancer, anxiety, osteoporosis, depression, $p < 0.05$; $n = 734$). While 40% of MA used exercise and 40% used diet to treat any condition, 38% used no treatment. The four most important sources of nutrition information were general practitioners (1196), the internet (1050), and sports or general dietitians/nutritionists (1031 and 927) (range: 287-1196; $n = 757$).

Conclusion: MA have a lower prevalence of chronic conditions than the general population. Some may benefit from tailored lifestyle education to support healthy ageing utilising experts including dietitians.