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Knowledge of Nutritional Habits in NCAA Division I Female Athletes

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College student-athletes often lack the nutritional knowledge and practical skills to optimize their nutrition for health and performance. While the benefits of optimal nutrition for athletic performance are well established, implementation of nutritional programming in smaller athletic departments has been slow. Following recommendations from the literature, and in order to increase the knowledge of appropriate nutritional strategies and skills of female student-athletes, an educational program to enhance athletic performance was developed and implemented. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this investigation was to assess the effect of the nutrition education program. **METHODS:** Fifteen (n=15) NCAA Division I female student-athletes volunteered to participate. The investigation consisted of a pre-intervention assessment of knowledge related to proper nutrition for athletic performance, educational programming, and a post-program assessment. Participants completed a daily food/liquid log for a period of three weeks. The participants were provided with educational information via email covering topics including appropriate hydration, fueling during exercise, eating while traveling, identifying and selecting macronutrient sources, eating for top performance, and forming beneficial nutritional habits. Participants' daily food logs were reviewed periodically to identify potential implementation of the provided nutrition education sources. A post-program assessment was administered to determine changes in knowledge of nutrition related to athletic performance. **RESULTS:** All (n=15) of the participants completed the daily food logs. The mean pre-intervention knowledge score was $76.6\% \pm 7.32$. The mean post-intervention knowledge score was $83.32\% \pm 5.00$. Paired t-test revealed a significant difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention knowledge of nutrition for athletic performance ($t(12)=-2.86, p=0.01$). Qualitative review of the food logs revealed an overall increase in in the quality of completion. **CONCLUSIONS:** Knowledge of nutrition for athletic performance increased as a result of a three week program. Interventions focused on education providing an opportunity to positively influence nutritional knowledge and skills of female student-athletes.