

Invited Review

Contribution of sports dietitians to improvements in international competitiveness: provision of nutritional support to the Japanese national badminton team

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ABSTRACT

The Japan Institute of Sports Sciences (JISS) is the central body promoting medical and scientific support for Japanese national teams. As a sports dietitian, I have been in charge of nutritional support for the badminton national team since 2013, with the goal of improving their year-round physical condition within the framework of the JISS.

The players must participate in competitions around the world and throughout the year. They are required to obtain nutritional knowledge and the ability to choose performance foods, as they need to maintain their conditioning irrespective of time and place. Therefore, to help players improve their conditioning effectively throughout the year, we investigated problems related to performance nutrition among elite Japanese badminton athletes. We first administered surveys to clarify the existence of any nutritional problems among the players. Next, based on the results of the surveys, we established individualized recommendations for nutrient targets and provided nutritional education to solve the identified problems. The number of items in the surveys has increased annually to a present total of 8 items.

Sports dietitians involved in the field need to investigate and verify dietary problems using objective data to contribute to the international competitiveness of athletes and teams. The present data also shows that sports dietitians need to establish evidence systematically to solve problems, as evidence from the perspective of nutritional support for elite Japanese athletes and teams remains very limited.

Therefore, I will share my views on research and the support of elite athletes by introducing the nutritional support that is being provided to the Japanese national badminton team.

Keywords: practical nutritional support, using objective data, nutritional assessment, nutritional education, nutritional intervention effect