

Risk of Disrupted Eating Attitudes in Disabled Athletes

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Abstract : Background: Undergoing rigid dietary habits for enhancing athletic performance could lead to eating disorders. High prevalence of eating disorders among female athletes has been already reported. However, the risk of disordered eating among disabled athletes is not known. A better knowledge of the different eating behaviors and their prevalence in disabled athletes would be helpful to understand interactions between eating and health. This study aimed to examine the cognitive restraint, uncontrolled eating and emotional eating behaviors in a disabled athlete population. Method: A total of 70 disabled Turkish national athletes (33 female, 37 male) from 5 sport branches (soccer, weight lifting, shooting, table tennis and basketball) were involved in the study. The cognitive restraint, uncontrolled eating and emotional eating behaviors were assessed using the revised version of Three Factor Eating Questionnaire-R18 (TFEQ-R18). The questionnaires were conducted by dietitian during the preparation camps of athletes. Body weight, height and waist circumference (WC) were measured; and body composition was analyzed by bioelectrical impedance analysis method. Results: The TFEQ scales showed a cognitive dietary restraint score of 13.9 ± 4.2 , uncontrolled eating score of 17.7 ± 5.8 and emotional eating score of 4.9 ± 2.5 . The mean score of total TFEQ-R18 was 36.5 ± 8.62 . Neither total TFEQ-R18 score nor subscale scores differed significantly by gender or sport branches ($p > 0.05$, for each). The scores were also similar in BMI groups ($n=63$; $p > 0.05$). Total TFEQ, uncontrolled eating and emotional eating scores were significantly higher among the athletes with congenital disabilities compared to the scores of the athletes with acquired disabilities ($p < 0.05$, for each). Moreover, the cognitive dietary restraint score was significantly high in athletes who would like to lose weight ($p=0.009$). Conclusion: Disabled athletes might have a risk of disordered eating. The different eating behaviors among disabled athletes should be assessed using validated tools to develop personalized nutritional strategies for those athletes.

Keywords : disabled athletes, eating behaviour, three-factor eating questionnaire-r18, body composition

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