

Nutritional Supplement Usage among Disabled Athletes

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Abstract : Purpose: Nutritional supplement usage is widespread among athletes all over the world. However, the usage among disabled athletes is not well-known. This study aimed to evaluate dietary supplement use in disabled athletes, their motivation for consuming supplements, sources of information, and their side effect. Methods: A total of 75 Turkish National Team's disabled athletes (38 female, 37 male) from 5 sport branches (soccer, weight lifting, shooting, table tennis and basketball), aged 13- 55 years, were participated in the study. Nutritional supplement usage was inquired using a questionnaire by a dietitian at their preparation camps. Results: A total of 22.7% of the athletes (18.4% and 27% of, respectively females and males) used some type of dietary supplements. Protein (35.3%), amino acid (29.4%), carnitine (29.4%), creatine (23.5%) and glucosamine (23.5%) were mostly preferred nutritional supplements by all athletes. The most common supplements use was obtained among weightlifters (71.4%), followed by the athletes of soccer (23.5%), table tennis (15.4%), and basketball (6.7%). No nutritional supplement usage was observed among shooters. Total of 41.2% consumers declared more than one reason for taking nutritional supplements. The main motivation for supplement usage was improving athletic performance (63.5%). Other reasons were weight loss, weight gain, muscle development, health protection and nutritional support. Athletes were more likely to get recommendation about nutritional supplement usage from team coaches (48.9%). Of 35.6% athletes reported that they made their own decision about using supplements. Other information sources were health professional, family member, friend and sale manager of sport retail store. Only 3 of 17 athletes reported side effects which were increased urine output, weight gain, loss of appetite and intestinal gas. Conclusions: Nutritional supplement usage was not common among disabled athletes. However, getting information from incompetent sources is disquieting. Considering their health problems, accurate information from competent sources should be provided to disabled athletes. Moreover, long term effects of nutritional supplements among disabled athletes should be examined in further studies.

Keywords : disabled athletes, ergogenic aid, nutritional supplement, vitamin supplementation

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