

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECT OF EXERCISE ON HYDRATION STATUS IN THE UWI STUDENT ATHLETES: URINE COLOUR AND PERCENTAGE WEIGHT LOSS

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Background: Physical performance is diminished by impaired physiological responses due to dehydration as an effect of exercise. Weight losses of $\geq 2\%$ of body mass after exercise presents itself a risk factor for dehydration. Athletes should supplement fluid intake to compensate for sweat losses during physical activity. The effects of exercise on hydration status in athletes in Trinidad and Tobago have not been studied. There exist general guidelines for fluid intake for athletes in international associations that should be highlighted and promoted in Trinidad and Tobago.

Objective: To investigate the effect of exercise on hydration status of student athletes from the UWI St. Augustine campus using urine colour change and weight loss.

Design: A survey design with the use of a questionnaire and urine colour scale was used. The athletes were all registered with the UWI, both as students and as athletes on the competing teams. Athletes from $n=8$ sporting disciplines were studied. The data was taken in the setting in which the athletes practiced, it included outdoor and indoor sporting grounds. The data was collected at the time of the athletes' practice sessions.

Results: Hydration status after physical activity was significantly altered ($p < 0.001$), so to were athletes weight after physical activity ($p < 0.001$). 17.3% of the sample population had weight losses that exceeded 2%.

Conclusion: Exercise increases dehydration and causes weight loss due to fluid losses in the UWI student athletes.