

THE NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND BODY COMPOSITION OF ADOLESCENT SWIMMERS

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Background – Nutrition is a very important factor in the performance and health of all athletes. In addition to nutrition, body composition plays a role in the performance of athletes. Unfortunately, there is no current information about the level of nutrition knowledge among adolescent swimmers in Trinidad and Tobago.

Objective – The purpose of this study was to assess the level of nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and body composition of adolescent swimmers, aged 11-21 years who train competitively in private clubs in Trinidad and Tobago. However, relatively little research exists about the nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and body composition of athletes.

Design – A questionnaire composed of 21 nutrition knowledge statements and 11 attitude statement was used. Anthropometric data were also collected. The data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance and Pearson's correlation analysis were used.

Results – The mean nutrition knowledge score for the population was 10.97 ± 2.897 ($52.25 \pm 13.795\%$) and the mean attitude towards nutrition score was 41.69 ± 6.215 (75.79 ± 11.300). The means for the body composition variables measure felling within recommended ranges.

Conclusion – Athletes lack the nutrition knowledge however have a positive attitude towards nutrition, further nutrition knowledge and attitudes were positively correlated. Athletes were also found to be at low nutritional risk based on anthropometric data.

