

# Nutrition education, disordered eating, and collegiate, male athletes: Is there a correlation?



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## THE BIG QUESTIONS

### Why this topic?

We wanted to know if nutrition education could make a difference in preventing disordered eating in a population that is often overlooked.

### Why this population?

- "...athletes were more likely to screen positive for an eating disorder (ED) than non-athletes" Flatt et al., 2020.
- ED's underdiagnosed in males leading to gaps in research

### Why education?

- "The level of nutrition knowledge is the major contributor for appropriate nutritional habits and attitudes" Aydin et al., 2022.

## METHODS

Mixed methods cross-sectional study

### Participants

Volunteer sample of UD collegiate, male athletes

### Survey

**EAT-26:** Eating Attitudes Test

Screening tool to assess eating disorder risk

- 26 likert scale questions
- Score of 20 or ↑ = possible risk



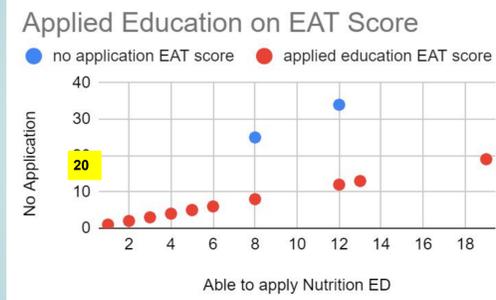
## RESULTS

### Was there a correlation?

- T-test found **no significant difference** in means of EAT-26 scores between the 2 groups (educated vs not)  $t(24) = .08$
- **2 of 26** participants scored above 20, signs of **at risk for ED's**
  - also the only participants that did not apply nutrition ed.

### Exploratory research

- **Significance** found in relation to **higher EAT-26 score** and not applying education

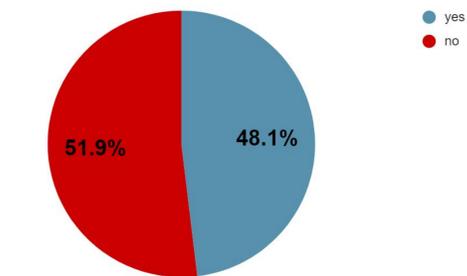


### Examples of participants' applied nutrition ED

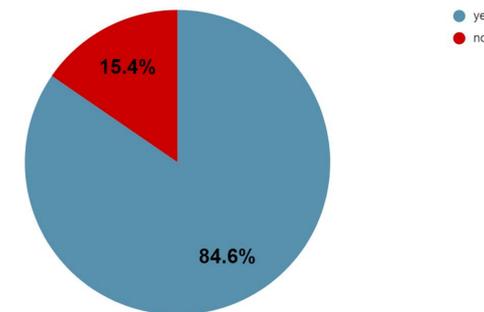
"I incorporate more vegetables and fruits into my diet because I learned about the effects of the nutrients in them and how they are important in my body"  
- Anonymous

"I learned that eating a variety of foods can help you to obtain your micronutrient intake."  
- Anonymous

Had Prior Nutrition Class vs No Class



Applied Nutrition Education Vs No Application



Participant responses when asked if they thought they had disordered eating habits:

"I don't eat at all and can't eat."  
-Anonymous

"I am particular about eating healthy and buying organic foods but sometimes I splurge on a box of donuts/eat a whole pizza then feel guilty and throw up."  
-Anonymous

## CONCLUSIONS

- **More extensive research** needed for such a complex topic
- Need to look at **more than 1 variable** at a time to try to **determine correlation**
- Need for **longitudinal studies**
- ★ Significance in relation to education application related to research by Rocks et al., (2017).
  - Showed that nutrition ed could be practiced in a harmful way
    - ex. orthorexia nervosa

We hope this study helps highlight the need for further research on this topic.

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