DIETARY INTAKE OF SOCCER PLAYERS: EFFECTS OF COMPETITION LEVEL AND PLAYING POSITION

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Introduction

The present study examined the effect of competition level and position of play on dietary intake of male soccer players (SP).

Methods

A total of 136 SP weighed and recorded their diet for 3 days: the day before a formal match, on match day, and the day after the match. After exclusion of 13 SP as under-reporters the diets of 123 SP were considered.

Results & Discussion

When data were analyzed for competition level SP in the Super League Division (SL, n=33) reported higher daily energy [195 ± 6 kJ/kg BM (Body Mass); $p < 0.01$], carbohydrate (6.0 ± 0.2 g/kg BM; $p < 0.01$), and protein (2.2 ± 0.1 g/kg BM; $p < 0.05$) intakes compared to SP in the 2nd (n=30) (energy: 159 ± 6 kJ/kg BM; carbohydrate: 4.6 ± 0.2 g/kg BM; protein: 1.9 ± 0.1 g/kg BM), 3rd (n=30) (energy: 153 ± 6 kJ/kg BM; carbohydrate: 4.5 ± 0.2 g/kg BM; protein: 1.7 ± 0.1 g/kg BM), and 4th (n=30) (energy: 152 ± 7 kJ/kg BM; carbohydrate: 4.2 ± 0.2 g/kg BM; protein: 1.7 ± 0.1 g/kg BM) national category (NC)(mean ± SE). Furthermore, the energy derived from carbohydrates was higher ($p < 0.01$) in the SL players (51 ± 1 %) compared to the 4th NC players (46 ± 1 %), whereas the energy derived from fat was lower (29 ± 1 %) ($p < 0.01$) in the SL compared to the 4th NC players (34 ± 1 %).

When data were analyzed for playing position, after excluding the 5 goalkeepers, energy and carbohydrate intakes were higher ($p < 0.01$) for the wide midfielders (n=24) (energy: 183 ± 7 kJ/kg BM; carbohydrate: 5.4 g/kg BM) compared to the central defenders (n=23) (energy: 147 ± 8 kJ/kg BM; carbohydrate: 4.1 ± 0.2 g/kg BM), whereas no differences were found among the other three positions (full backs/n=24, central midfielders/n=24, and attackers/n=23) for the other macronutrients.

With the exception of SL players, the SP in the other professional (2nd and 3rd NC) and semi-professional (4th NC) levels did not meet the carbohydrate intake guidelines[1].

Conclusion

The dietary intake of SP may differ according to playing position and competition level possibly due to different physiological demands.

References

1. FIFA/F-MARC (2006). *J Sports Sci, 24(7): 663-664.*