EFFECT OF NUTRITION EDUCATION ON SPORTS NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE AND EATING DISORDERS TOWARDS INDONESIAN AND THAI STUDENT-ATHLETES: A COMPARISON STUDY

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Abstract -
Introduction: Athletes have special nutrition requirements to fuel, recover, and adapt to their training optimally. Nutrition knowledge, especially sports nutrition, provides the understanding to alter dietary intake. This research aims to evaluate the nutrition education of student athletes in Indonesia and Thailand concerning nutrition knowledge and eating disorders. Methods: Sports dietitians and sport education expert from the Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia and North Bangkok University, Thailand, recruited athletes to complete the research, a 75-item Nutrition Knowledge Questionnaire (NKQ), which contained six sections (weight management, macronutrients, micronutrients, sports nutrition, supplement use and alcohol consumption). Sports dietitians provided nutrition education through mentoring with four modules, which were given weekly for 4 weeks. The primary outcome measures were nutrition knowledge score and eating disorders, which were assessed using the Eating Attitude Test (EAT-26). For knowledge scores and eating disorders, paired t-test and independent t-tests were used to evaluate differences between groups. Results: Sports dietitians from the Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia and North Bangkok University, Thailand, recruited a convenience sample of 62 athletes for each group. Indonesian athletes' nutritional knowledge regarding weight management, micronutrients, sports nutrition, and alcohol consumption was higher than that of Thai student athletes. There were differences in athletes' nutritional knowledge regarding weight management, macronutrients, micronutrients, sports nutrition, supplement use, alcohol consumption, and eating disorders before and after the intervention ($p<0.05$). Nutrition knowledge gaps were identified in alcohol use and eating disorders between student athletes in Indonesia and Thailand. Conclusions: Nutrition education is effective in increasing nutritional knowledge and reducing the risk of eating disorders in student athletes in Indonesia and Thailand.

Keywords - Nutrition Education, Nutrition Knowledge, Dietary Intake, Student Athletes