Nutritional Analysis of a Female College Athlete

Will Mullins & Austin Reames

Introduction

This nutritional analysis looks at the dietary habits, macronutrient, and micronutrient intake of a female college athlete. This subject is 20 years old, 65 inches tall, and weighs 142 pounds. According to Yon and Johnson (2005), the estimated activity level of a 20 year-old female who walks just under 3 miles daily is 1.5. Therefore, the estimated activity level of 1.5 was used to calculated the estimated daily caloric need of 2508 kilocalories (kCals). According to McGuire and Beerman (2013), adults need to consume 45%-65% of their calories from carbohydrates, 20-35% of their calories from fats, and 10-35% of their calories from protein. This individual was recommended to consume 40% (1003.2 kCals) of their calories from carbohydrates, 30% (752.4 kCals) of their calories from fats, and 30% (752.4 kCals) of their calories from proteins. Additionally, recommendations for Vitamin C and Vitamin A intake were provided to the subject. According to McGuire and Beerman (2013), the recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) for Vitamin C and Vitamin A are 75 mg/day and 700 μg/day respectively.

Week One Analysis

After the first five days of this study, caloric and nutrient consumption was recorded and analyzed. Figure 4 portrays that the subject did not consume the recommended amount of kilocalories over the first 5 days. However, the subject did consume almost the exact recommended proportions of each macronutrient (Figure 2). Furthermore, the subject actually went over the daily recommendation Vitamin C intake, but was roughly 300μg shy the daily recommendation for Vitamin A. Additionally, the subject drank an average of 380oz of water daily, which is significantly less than recommended. On the subject’s worst day, the subject actually ate very nutrient dense, nutritious foods. However, she did not consume enough of them and fell over 1400 kCals short of the recommendation and was also far from the recommended macronutrient percentages. This might have been due to a busy day of classwork or homework. The subject could modify her schedule to fit snacks into her diet throughout the day to meet her caloric needs.

However, the subject did have good days. On the subject’s best day, she was still almost 1200 kCals short of the recommendation, but was almost exact with the recommended macronutrient consumption. This day probably was not filled with the amount of classwork or homework as the worst day, thus allowing for more food to be consumed.

Week Two Analysis

Following the second five days of this study, caloric and nutrient consumption was recorded and analyzed again. Figure 4 indicates that the subject failed to reach the recommended daily caloric intake, but did eat more than in the first 5 days. However, the subject strayed from the recommended macronutrient percentages more in the second five days (Figures 3 and 1). Also, the subject failed to reach either of the daily recommendations for Vitamin C and Vitamin A, falling significantly short of the recommendations for both micronutrients. Also, the subject maintained the exact same daily water intake for the second five days (38oz), thus falling significantly short of the recommended daily intake of 91.3oz. On the subject’s worst day of the second half of the study, the subject only ate breakfast and dinner and only ate a hot dog and Doritos for dinner. This might have been to a busy day, as it was over Easter break. However, this could be avoided by setting meal times beforehand or bringing snacks to eat throughout the day. On the best day of the second half of the study, the subject ate a wide variety of nutrient dense foods, including a wide array of fruits and vegetables such as spinach and bananas. This might have been due to having set meal times at which the subject must eat. This helps to keep the subject disciplined and eating three nutritious meals daily.

Conclusion

This study revealed that this female collegiate athlete eats macronutrients within the AMDR ranges and within her desired ranges. However, the subject consistently does not eat enough calories for her lifestyle. In fact, the subject’s diet is inconsistent and improved very little following the recommendations made. This can be seen in Figure 4 and by looking at the comparisons made between Figures 2 and 3 and Figure 1. This subject must improve her diet and consume more kilocalories on a daily basis while maintaining a good macronutrient balance.

References