HYDRATION MOTIVATION

THE ROLE OF AMATEUR SPORT

RESEARCH AIM

Dehydration during exercise can have serious health implications. Currently research into motivations to drink water has yet to consider how experience in sport affects motivation.

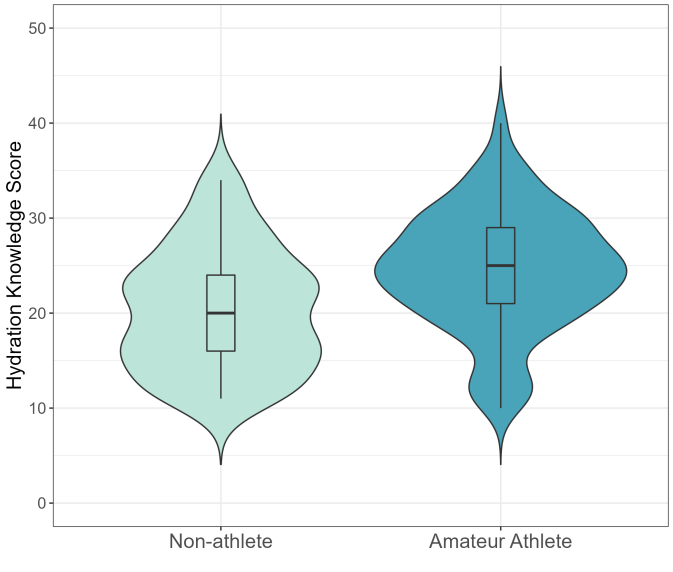
This mixed methods investigation assessed the hydration knowledge and the motivational processes behind motivation in both amateur and non-athletes.

The quantitative survey assessed hydration knowledge, daily fluid intake for days with and without exercise and fluid intake habits. The qualitative survey asked participants where they perceived their knowledge came from and what their motivations were to hydrate.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

In line with our hypothesis, amateur athletes demonstrated higher hydration knowledge than non-athlete participants. On average, amateur athletes scored 5 point higher on the hydration knowledge test. However, neither athlete status nor hydration knowledge were predictors of fluid intake.

Figure 1 *Comparison of Hydration Knowledge Score*



In our exploratory analysis we found that the significant predictors of fluid intake were whether participants drank water every hour and whether they exercised that day. Both sample groups show an increase in fluid intake on days with exercise compared to days without. Interestingly, amateur athletes on average drank 468ml of fluid more than non-athletes on days with exercise. In comparison, on days without exercise they only drank 237ml more.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Qualitative results came under three main themes:

"I feel like I should've learnt more..." Education isn't sufficient

"Routine and habit drives my hydration" reliance upon regime to encourage drinking

"It makes me feel better..." the rewards from drinking

Participants identified that there was a lack of education on hydration for both groups. Although they may understand the importance of drinking water they did not feel they had been educated on how to effectively drink in order to sustain their health.

Situated habits are important for driving hydration, commonly mentioned situations were home, work and exercise. It appears that differences in fluid intake may be attributed to different routines when exercising. Amateur athletes may benefit from external reminders from coaches or teammates to hydrate during sessions.

The perceived reward from drinking water is important to encourage greater water intake. An individual that enjoys drinking water will seek out that behaviour in any situation whether it is routine or not. Participants also described their enjoyment in drinking water as a motivation. This enjoyment was rarely mentioned alongside other motivations. It appears from the data that those individuals who receive reward from drinking water do not require any other motivation to stay hydrated.

APPLIED IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, this investigation developed an understanding into the role of amateur sport in individual hydration knowledge and water intake. Although education on hydration is important, health interventions need to consider the motivations behind fluid intake and how they can help individuals change their motivations to encourage greater hydration. Our results suggest that routine and associating reward with water intake are important to increasing hydration.

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