

Nutritional survey on Japanese elite elderly athletes.

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Summary

Aging is a highly individualized process, resulting in large inter-individual differences in health and function. Importance of physical activity for maintaining health and successful aging is getting recognition, and increasing number of middle-aged people are now engaged in recreational physical activity. Although very limited, some are involved in sports and competitive athletic events. The present study surveyed nutritional status of Japanese elite master aged 73 – 90 years (five males 86.4 ± 2.9 years; five females 78.4 ± 5.3 years), including four world record holders in their age-category. Trained dieticians recorded recipes of the elderly athletes for three days at their home and the nutrient contents of their diet were estimated using software Basic 4 (Kagawa Nutrition University) based on Standard Tables of Food Composition in Japan (Fifth revised edition, 2000). Compared with the age-matched sedentary subjects in the National Nutritional Survey of Japan (1999), male and female athletes took more energy, protein, fat and carbohydrate. Ratio of fat calorie intake to total calorie intake was higher in the athletes than the sedentary, indicating the athletes taking more energy from fat. Intake of vitamins and salt was similar between the two groups. As observed in a general population, salt intake of the athletes was positively correlated with total energy intake and negatively correlated with ratio of animal protein calorie intake to total calorie intake.