

# Sports Talent Identification in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year UST High School Students

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## ABSTRACT

**Background and Objectives:** An elite athlete is a combination of hard work, extensive training, talent and skill. Talent is a natural endowment of a person, which can be enhanced. Our objectives are to obtain percentiles and to identify children belonging in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile and above. This talent identification program is to determine potential athletes that can undergo sports talent development.

**Methodology:** Descriptive study with 360 subjects, age ranging from 11 – 15 years old from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year student of UST High School Department. This study was based from the Philippine Sports Talent Identification Program of the Philippine Sports Commission. Pearson's correlation was used to validate reliability test done during the pilot study. Percentile was used to interpret the data gathered. The subjects were sorted by age group and gender.

**Results:** The results of the pilot study showed excellent inter and intra-rater reliability among assessors, with average  $r = 0.74$  to  $0.99$ . In the study, 403 participated and 360 finished the test protocols. 11 subjects fell under the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile and above. They were recommended to participate in different sports. **Conclusion:** Talent identification can help in recruiting potential athletes that can hopefully improve the UST Sports Program.

**Keywords:** Sports Talent Identification, Physiological Testing, Anthropometric Measurements

## COMMENTARY

A final dimension of sports talent is talent in the process of development. Talented athletes who excel in their sports or perhaps even dominate their peers exist at every age level. They may be bigger, stronger, faster, or simply better than other children.<sup>1</sup> Peltola along with Thomson and Beavis defined talent identification as "that process by which children are encouraged to participate in the sports at which they are most likely to succeed, based on the results of testing selected parameters. These parameters are designed to predict performance capacity, taking into account the child's current level of fitness and maturity."<sup>2</sup>

While talent identification through competition has been operating ever since, organized competitive sports also flourish. It has only been recently that systematic talent identification has become a part of sport around the world (Baur 1988, Hahn 1990, Hoare 1995, and Bompa 1985). Eastern countries like the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Romania are examples of countries that implemented state run, systematic talent identification programs as early as the 1960s and 1970s (Baur 1988, Bompa 1985, Thomson

1992, and Thomson et.al 1985)<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>. While first world countries such as Australia and the United States have typically attempted to have systems in place to develop talented individuals after they have identified themselves through competition in their chosen sport (Peltola 1992).

The ever increasing pressure and competition faced by all sports for government, sponsorship and spectator revenue in the 90s, makes it extremely difficult for governments and sports themselves to fund comprehensive talent identification programs. Another factor limiting talent identification is the extreme difficulty to predict the future development of an athlete when identification is carried out at a young age. In addition, talented children generally exhibit well-formed ability, which can be difficult to identify the particular sport a young athlete will be best suited for. This makes it problematic for individual sports to pinpoint the correct age to carry out their talent identification programs. Some experts feel that it could be detrimental for children to specialize in a particular sport before 13 years of age, while others see it as necessary to direct young athletes

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to some sports before they reach 12 years of age to aid efficient skill development. (Jarver 1981 and Thomson et.al 1985)<sup>3,6</sup>

There seems to be different opinions as regards the precise timing of talent identification screening. Bompa (1985) believes that comprehensive talent identification needs to be carried out a number of years with three main phases. The primary phase of talent identification should occur during the years 3-8 and needs to be determined by a physician's examination and is aimed at detecting body malfunctions and physical deficiencies which may restrict future sport endeavors. The secondary phase of talent identification should be conducted between the ages of 9 and 17, however this age range will vary between sports e.g. 9-10 for gymnastics, 10-15 for girls and 10-17 for boys in other sports. This phase of talent identification needs to be conducted on athletes who have already experienced organized training and requires a comprehensive assessment of physiological and anthropometric parameters. Psychological assessment and profiling commence during this phase. The final phase of talent identification is mainly concerned with high caliber athletes like national team members. Talent identification in this phase needs to be very sport specific.

The study of Mallillin et al showed an exemplary effort in initiating sports talent identification among high school students by following similar procedures obtained from the Philippine Sports Talent Identification Manual of the Philippine Sports commission and patterned after the Australian Institute of Sports Talent Search Program. To some degree, findings derived from this study had identified subjects that fall under the 90th percentile and above and were recommended to participate in different sports. In an attempt to

pursue this system, talent identification programs need to be scientifically-based and assessment should be continuous instead of being done only once. In addition, the results of this study can also be compared to the norms presented at the PSTIP Manual (2004) and other Asian data obtained from Malaysia Talent Identification Manual. The Philippine Sports Talent Identification Manual is a useful tool in identifying potential Filipino talents. Thus, implementation in different Philippine school systems must be sought.

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# Dietary Pattern of Filipino Elite Endurance Athletes

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## ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** The research study aims to determine the dietary pattern of Filipino elite endurance athletes competing for the Philippine National Team. The available study on the Food Frequency Questionnaire was used as a tool to attain the objective of this research. **Method:** Fifty athletes who participated in the study were interviewed on their food intake using the Food Frequency Questionnaire. They were also asked to record their one week food intake using food diary. Afterwards, the data from the FFQ was then tallied to determine the athlete's usual dietary pattern and was further validated by using a 7- Day Food Record. **Statistical Analysis:** Group means and standard deviations were calculated for the individual daily food intakes both from the FFQ and results from the food record. Pearson Correlation was used to calculate the linear association between the results of the two nutritional methods used. **Results and Discussion:** Common foods eaten for the three meals were rice, fish or chicken and fruits. Majority ate three times a day although breakfast was never eaten on time by most athletes. Snacks were seldom taken. The subjects had intake beyond the normal range of macronutrients. **Conclusion:** Skipping meals is not common among the subjects. Their dietary pattern should be meeting the percentage distribution of macronutrients from the total kilocaloric intake and should be the first priority of the athletes. Their dietary pattern should also include more variety of food to maximize the nutrient intake.

**Keywords:** Dietary Pattern (non-MESH), Elite Athletes (non-MESH), Endurance Athletes (non-MESH), Food Frequency Questionnaire (non-MESH), 7-Day Food Record (non-MESH)

## COMMENTARY

We recognize the important role of proper nutrition in sports performance, therefore this study on dietary patterns of athletes is a worthwhile endeavor. We are in dire need of information about the nutritional status of athletes and what we can do to improve their diets and ultimately, their physical performance.

The traditional methods of measuring dietary intake such as the 24-hour food recall, food records and food frequency questionnaires have been widely reviewed. Each of these methods has its inherent strengths and weaknesses. The most common error is under or over reporting of computed nutrient intake. Comparison of intake using these methods with an accepted biomarker such as the doubly labeled water has shown that under reporting of energy intake exists <sup>1</sup>. If under reporting of the energy intake existed in this data, it could generate a lower energy intake in the athletes and might mislead nutritionist to recommend increasing their intake. However, if the

objective of the study was just to determine dietary pattern, this underestimation bias may not be felt.

A specific limitation of the FFQ is that the nutrient intake can only be useful in ranking individuals into levels of intake from low, medium to high<sup>2</sup>, but the absolute intake may be higher or lower as compared to more accepted methods. Hence, we should bear in mind the objectives of the study. If an estimate of the true intake is desired, other quantitative methods of determining intake should be resorted to.

The study was not explicit on how the dietary pattern was defined. If dietary pattern was measured in terms of the common foods eaten by meal, this may have limited use to the athletes. It would be good to have more information of how varied their diets are or how much they take in relation to the recommended levels. This would give more impact in determining their risk for nutritional deficiencies or in planning better meals.

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The FFQ data on percentage contribution energy intake from carbohydrates, protein and fats showed that most athletes consume more than the recommended levels of energy from each nutrient. Does the data imply that the athletes are taking more energy foods than what is required? If the data on nutrient intake from the food record were tabulated in the same way, would differences be evident?

Collecting dietary information for special groups is a tedious job. I commend the authors for their efforts in conducting this type of study.

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