

Knowledge, prevalence and attitudes of West Wales amateur rugby players towards supplementation.

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Introduction

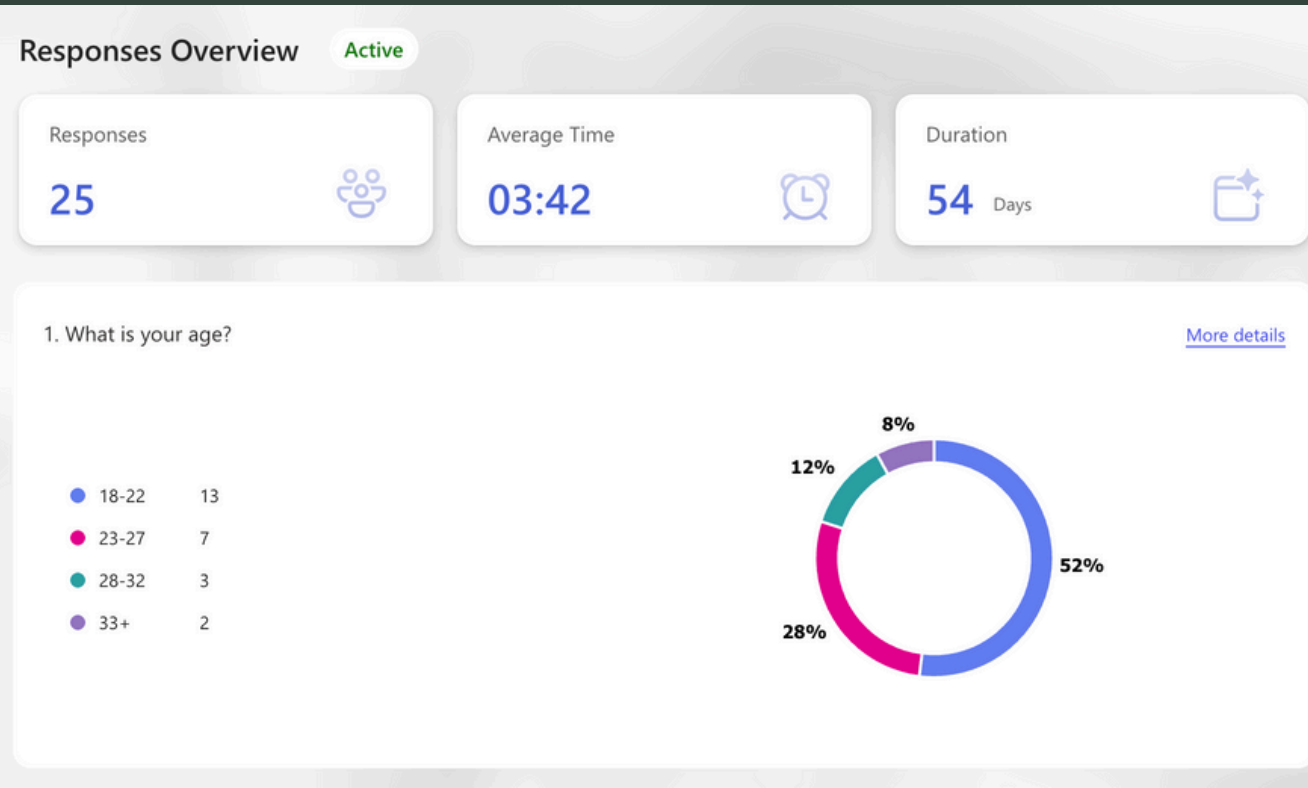
Supplementation has been extensively studied among elite athletes, primarily to enhance peak performance and support overall health. However, an understanding of supplement use is essential for all athletes, not only to maximise benefits but also to prevent unintentional violations of anti-doping regulations. While existing research has often focused on elite competitors, recent attention has turned to amateur athletes and their knowledge of supplementation. Notably, studies by Jovanov et al. (2019) and Sanches-Oliver et al. (2020) identified significant knowledge gaps among amateur athletes, particularly regarding appropriate dosages and potential side effects of their supplement use. These findings underscore a broader issue that amateur rugby players often lack adequate understanding of supplementation and the risks involved. This present study aimed to investigate amateur rugby players’ knowledge and attitudes toward supplement use, with the hypothesis that their understanding will be insufficient, particularly concerning the risks associated with supplementation.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research design, utilising questionnaires as the data collection method.

The questionnaire was given out online through Microsoft Forms to 3 amateur clubs reaching a total of around 75 players. With 25 total responses, the study managed a 33% questionnaire return rate.

The data was analysed using SPSS Statistics, employing multiple chi-squared tests to compare various variables and identify any significant differences.

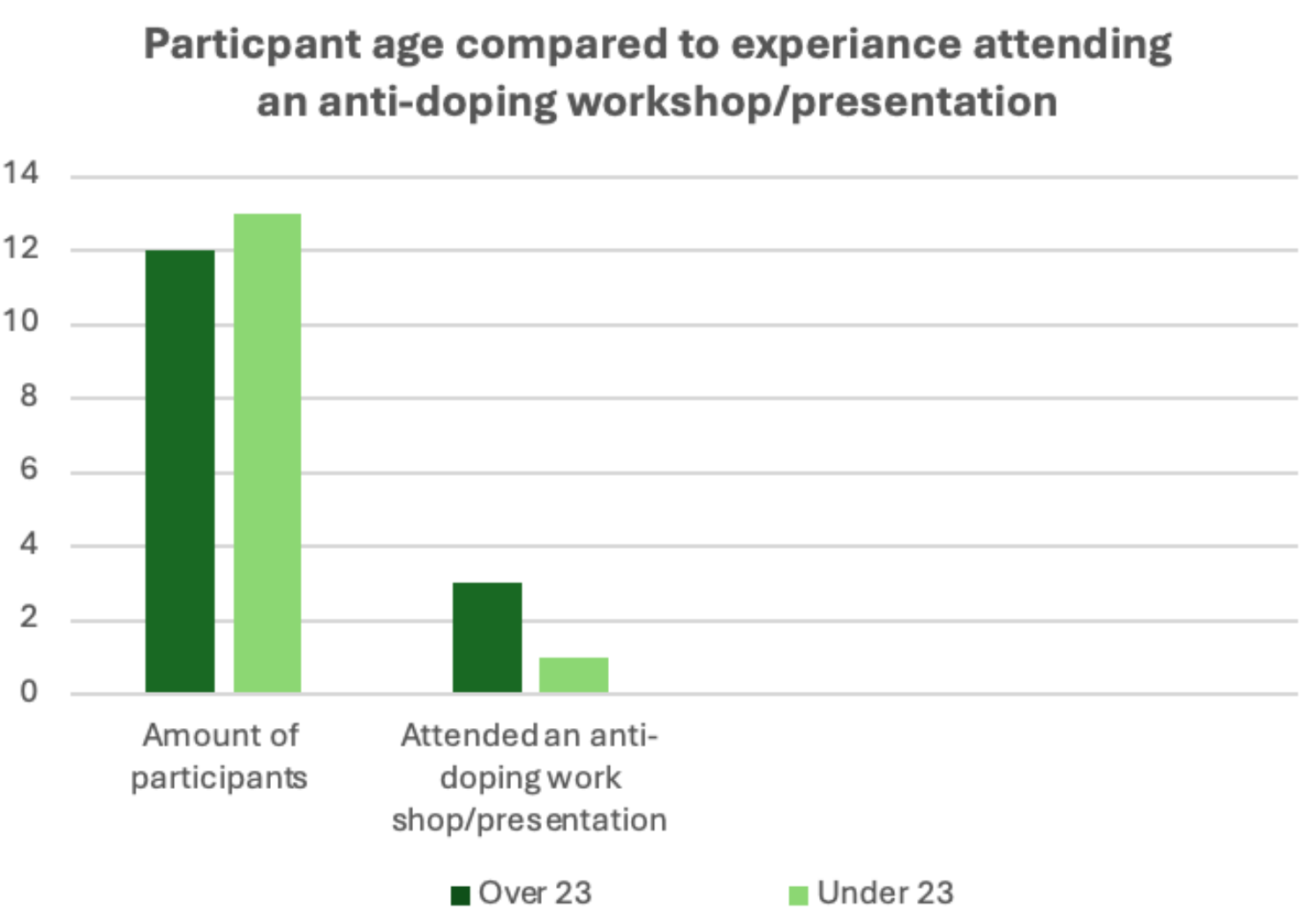


Results

Out of 25 total participants, 14 used some form of supplementation (56%). One important analysis explored the relationship between age and participation in workshops or presentations on nutritional supplements and/or anti-doping. Although only 4/25 participants had attended an anti-doping presentation or workshop, the findings showed a statistically significant p-value (.001), indicating that younger players were notably less likely to have attended these educational sessions. This can be shown by figure 1 below.

Additionally, among the 44% (11 individuals) who reported not using supplements, 64% attributed their decision to a lack of knowledge, pointing to a considerable educational gap around supplementation. Similarly, 11 participants (44%) indicated they lacked access to information on anti-doping. Despite the availability of free online resources, players have not been directed to or made aware of these. This issue was further emphasised by another question, where 88% (22 participants) said they did not have access to a sports nutritionist or dietitian through their rugby team.

Figure 1: Age of participants and anti-doping presentations attended



Conclusion

The research project managed to gather valuable data and information on amateur players knowledge on supplementation. The data highlighted an emphasis on further education being made accessible for amateur players around anti-doping to avoid anti-doping violations and harm to health with misuse of supplements.

References

Sánchez-Oliver, A.J. et al. (2020) ‘A Survey on Dietary Supplement Consumption in Amateur and Professional Rugby Players’, *Foods*, 10(1), pp. 7-. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods10010007>.

Jovanov, P. et al. (2019) ‘Prevalence, knowledge and attitudes towards using sports supplements among young athletes’, *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition*, 16(1), pp. 27–27. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12970-019-0294-7>.