D2.S1.3 - 5 in 5 Free Communications - Multi: Sport and Performance and Physiology and Nutrition

D2.S1.3(1) The napping behaviours of British student-athletes

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Student-athletes are a population that display a high prevalence of poor sleep characteristics in response to sport- and academic-related sleep risk factors, and poor sleep may be harmful to sporting and academic performance (Kroshus et al., 2019, British Journal of Sports Medicine, 53(12), 731-736). Napping provides a means to supplement restricted nocturnal sleep. Therefore, the aim of this investigation was to examine the self-reported sleep characteristics and napping behaviours of British student-athletes. With institutional ethics approval, 157 participants (age range 16-25, 51.0% male) completed the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS), and the Sleep Hygiene Index (SHI). Participants that reported napping also completed a modified version of a 6-item napping questionnaire (Lovato et al., 2014, PLoS ONE, 9(11):e113666). Associations between sleep questionnaires and napping were investigated using Pearson correlations. The results demonstrated that 100 participants (63.7%) reported napping ≥1 weekly and were classified as nappers. Amongst nappers, mean (±SD) weekly nap frequency was 2.5 ± 1.3 times. Most participants reported napping once (26%) or twice (31%) weekly (three: 24%; four: 14%; five or more times: 5%). Moderate significant associations with SHI ($r(98) = .423$, $P < 0.001$) and ESS ($r(98) = .417$, $P < 0.001$) global scores and nap frequency were observed, indicating poorer sleep hygiene behaviours and increased daytime sleepiness as nap frequency increased. Mean (±SD) nap onset time was 14:43 ± 02:09, with 45% of naps commencing between 14:00 and 16:00. Participants reported naps were more commonly initiated spontaneously (39%) rather than planned (13%), with 48% of responses reporting a mixture of both. Similarly, naps were ended spontaneously (42%) more often than using an alarm (28%), with 28% reporting a mixture. Only 28% of participants reported short nap durations of <30 minutes, whereas longer durations of 30-45 minutes (22%), 45-60 minutes (31%), and >60 minutes (19%) were more common. The most reported

reason for napping was feeling sleepy during the day (58%), followed by the nap refreshing them (26%), having spare time (5%), avoiding feeling sleepy later (5%), with 6% providing other reasons. These results indicate that napping is a common practice amongst British student-athletes, but some napping behaviours do not align with sleep hygiene recommendations (Irish et al., 2015, Sleep Medicine Reviews, 22, 23-36). These are likely to be driven by poor behavioural practices and inappropriate scheduling of training and lessons, which should seek to be addressed through targeted sleep interventions.