

Special Issue

Whole Foods and Supplements in Sports Nutrition: A Food-First, Not Food-Only Perspective

Message from the Guest Editor

Nutritional strategies for athletes increasingly span both whole foods and supplement use, with growing interest in how these approaches compare, complement one another, and can be integrated in practice. Whole foods provide a complex matrix of nutrients and bioactive compounds, while supplements can offer targeted, convenient, and precisely dosed support where dietary intake alone is insufficient. Common supplements such as proteins, creatine, amino acids, and electrolytes are widely used to improve endurance, strength, and post-exercise adaptation. These products can be particularly useful when high training loads, travel, or limited food access make it challenging to meet nutrient needs through food alone. As the supplement industry continues to grow, understanding proper usage, dosage, timing, and individual needs is essential for maximizing benefits and minimizing risks. In parallel, there is a need to better characterize when whole-food-based strategies are sufficient, when supplementation adds measurable value, and how bioavailability and tolerance differ between foods and isolated nutrients.

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Nutrients is an on-line open access journal that was first published in 2009. *Nutrients* adheres to rigorous peer-review and editorial processes and publishes only high quality manuscripts that address important issues related to the impacts of nutrients on human health. The Impact Factor of *Nutrients* has risen rapidly since its establishment and it is now ranked in the first quartile of journals publishing in the field of nutrition and dietetics research.

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