

ACHIEVING GREATNESS

NSCA COACHES CONFERENCE

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Conflict of Interest Statement

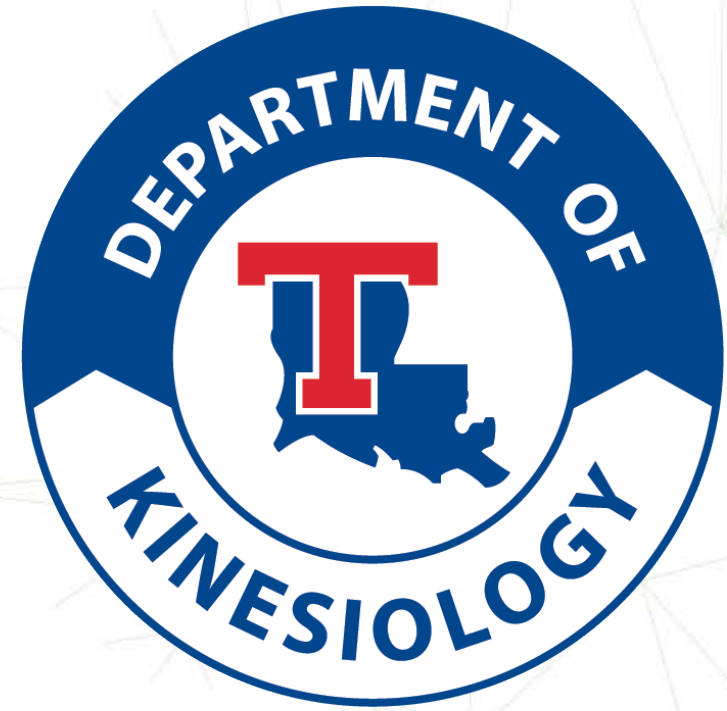
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Exertional Rhabdomyolysis: What Is Too Much?

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Introduction

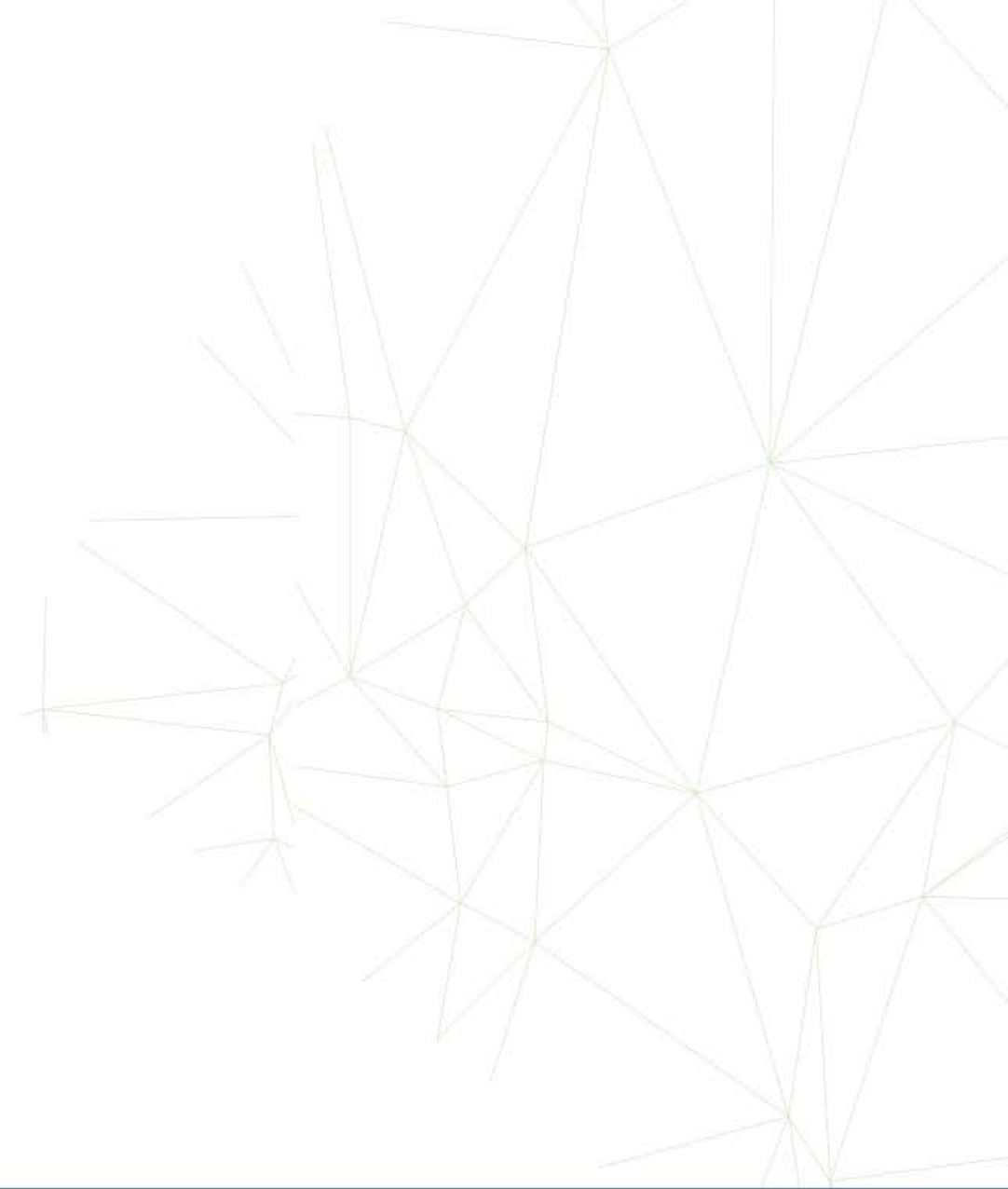
- Definition of rhabdomyolysis (rhabdo)
- Definition & physiology of exertional rhabdo (ER)
- Pushing athletes to their limits: case studies for coaches to learn from
- Recommendations for injury prevention in S&C context

A disclaimer: What this presentation is not.

- A witch hunt
- A detailed investigation of every incident of rhabdomyolysis in every setting
 - Emphasis on athletes; some reference to youth & military settings

Rhabdomyolysis

Rhabdo ... what?



Definition

- Rhabdomyolysis: massive destruction/disintegration of striated muscle

“rhabdo” = striped, “myo” = muscle, “lysis” = broken (Ramos & Dorgo, 2014)

What Causes Rhabdo?

Musculoskeletal trauma—damage to cell membrane

- crushing injuries
- burns
- infection
- drugs (including excessive alcohol, cocaine, etc.)
- ingestion of toxins
- **heat stress**
- cold stress
- sickle cell trait
- **excessive [volume of] exercise**

Occurs in 85% of
cases of traumatic
injury

Huerta-Aladin, Varon & Marik (2005)

Huerta-Alardin, Varon, & Marik (2005); Tietze & Borchers (2014)

Who Else Gets Rhabdo?

- Racehorses
 - genetic tendency for chronic rhabdo in some
- Caged/restrained animals
- Sick people
- Drug addicts & alcoholics
- Crush victims
- ...And other scenarios when muscle tissue is severely damaged

Definition

- Exertional Rhabdomyolysis (ER): rhabdo brought on by extreme exertion of some kind
 - Sport or military training, punishment, etc.
 - Perfect storm + additional cofactors
- Numerous case studies exist from injury brought on by personal trainers, coaches, PE teachers, military training instructors, competition, etc.

Initial Symptoms of ER

- Severe muscle pain, cramps, swelling
- Weakness
- Sometimes tea-colored urine
- Onset follows activity, may lag a day or so

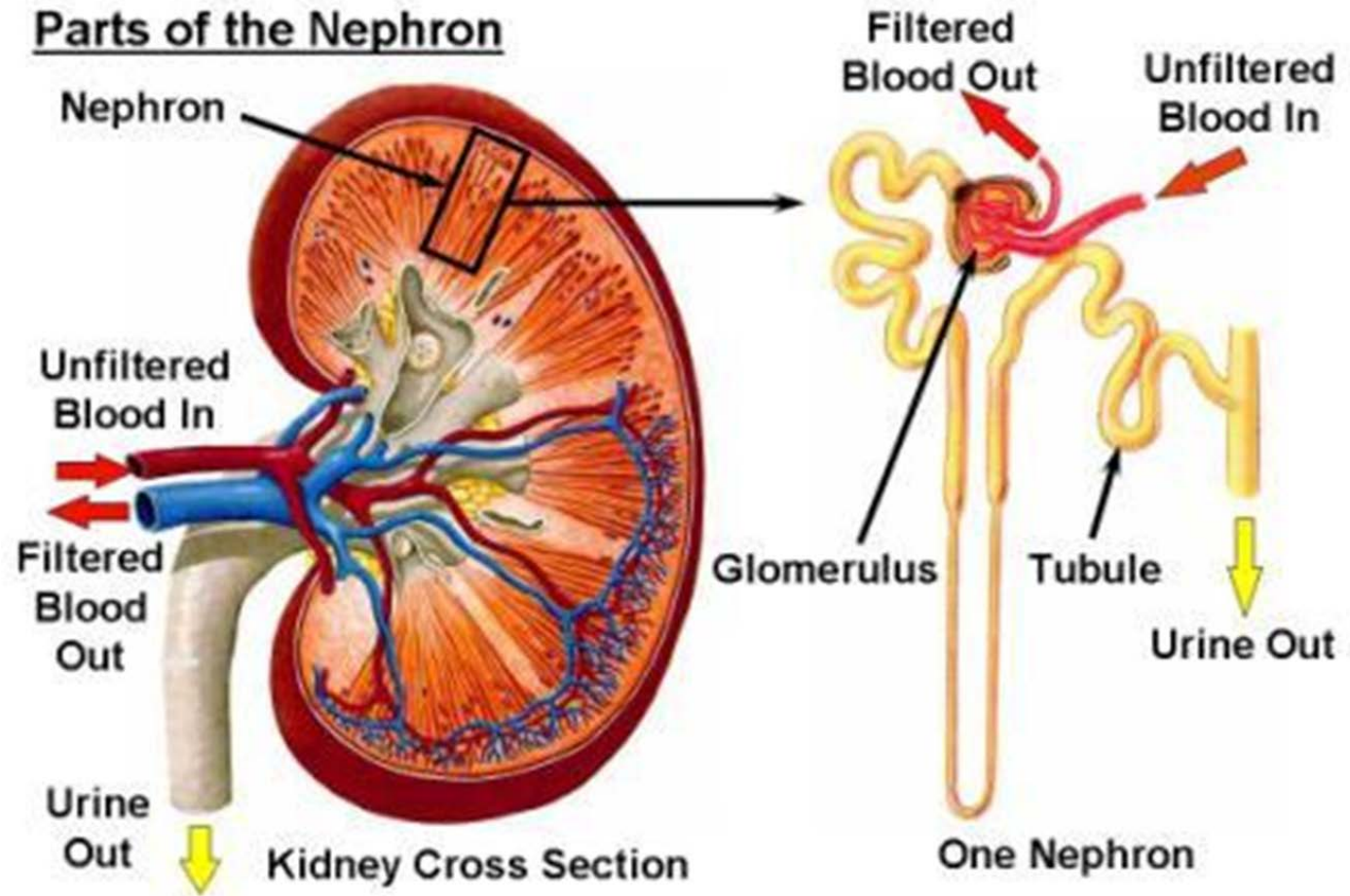
Diagnosing ER

- Done via formal medical care (Emergency Room)
 - evaluation of blood Creatine Kinase (CK)
 - most sensitive factor
 - Clinical threshold \approx 5X normal limit
 - Some argument ongoing
 - Myoglobinuria: myoglobin (Mb) in urine
 - suggested to not be best indicator due to short half-life
 - Severe pain & cramps
 - Not DOMS

Why Is ER A Problem?

1. Contents of muscle cells cause problems if they go elsewhere in the body

- heavy concentrations of substances from intramuscular space (i.e. myoglobin) become toxic to kidneys



Why Is ER A Problem?

2. A certain level of local damage may lead to compartment syndrome
 - Medical emergency involving over-pressurized section of tissue within fascia
 - May require surgery to prevent further tissue necrosis

Why Is ER A Problem?

- 3. Cardiovascular problems such as arrhythmia & clotting ... that may lead to **DEATH**
- Therefore ER is a serious clinical health condition, and has been brought on in athletes usually* by poor training decisions
 - not always well-explained

*possibly combined with poor lifestyle decisions, insufficient recovery, or illness

Possible Local Precipitating Factors Leading to ER

1. Cross-bridge & structural sarcolemma damage from lots of eccentric phase
 2. Muscle cell hypoxia leading to depletion of ATP
 - Anaerobic conditions of shock states
 - vascular occlusion, tissue compression, & inappropriate exercise
 - Membrane pumps, etc. don't function without ATP
 - may compound issue and lead to further necrosis
(Huerta-Alardin, Varon, & Marik, 2005)
 3. Heat injury + extreme exertion
(Szczepanik, Heled, Capaccione, Campbell, Deuster, & O'Connor, 2014)
- ...or...
4. Other more unusual factors

With ER In Athletes We Must Consider...

- Possible influence of medication, trace amounts of **recreational drugs**, and tainted supplements

Huerta-Alardin, Varon, & Marik (2005)

Athletes With Increased Risk for ER

- Sickle Cell Trait
 - Sickling possibly brought on by stress or ...?
 - Involves cascade of events leading to CV tissue damage
 - Some case reports/studies exist of sudden death in athletes with sickling-related ER
 - i.e. One 19 y.o. college football player (Harrykissoo et al., 2007)

What Causes ER?

- Primary causative factors in preventable cases are acute high volume, with **high density**, likely involving **repeated failure**
 - Consider timing of preventable cases in athletes that we'll discuss
- We have what can be the perfect storm for inducing ER:
 - Massive muscle damage (lots of eccentric action)
 - Heavy sweating due to intramuscular heat production
 - less fluid to transport heat away
 - Environmental heat (see Casa et al., 2012)
 - Rapid ATP degradation
 - Possible electrolyte imbalance

Dehydration May Increase ER Risk

- Consider the intracellular environment
 - muscle cell is about 75% water (McArdle Katch, & Katch, 2007)
 - water provides the solvent for intracellular biological mechanisms
 - enzymes, electrolytes, etc.
 - the human body has an optimal range
 - if compromised can reduce function

Is Blood Perfusion Constant?

- Dehydration has been demonstrated to affect blood perfusion between **compartments**
 - For review see Trangmar & Gonzalez-Alonso (2017)
- Brings about some complexity to training & recovery
- Does this increase value in recovery modalities?

Context of Blood Creatine Kinase

Context: American Football

- Many of these cases are seen in football, highlighted by media, so...
- Hoffman et al. (2005) sampled blood of D-III football players over a season
 - Creatine Kinase (CK) average values
 - Pre-camp: ≈ 50 U/L
 - **Camp** (Day 10; 2-a-days): ≈ 350 U/L starters, ≈ 175 U/L nonstarters *
 - Inseason (Week 3, 7, 10): ≈ 50 U/L
 - Myoglobin average levels were fairly consistent as measured, averaged around 25 ng/mL
- Hoffman et al. (2002) found in-game CK (starters) ≈ 175 U/L

Context: more from football

- Smoot, Cavanaugh, Amendola, West, & Herwaldt (2014) observed CK levels of 32 Iowa football athletes during camp
 - Day 1: 285 ± 801 (range: **72 - 4,659**) U/L
 - Day 3: $1,300 \pm 2,284$ (range: **217 - 12,067**) U/L
 - Day 7: $1,562 \pm 1,497$ (range: **229 - 7,453**) U/L
 - **Positions & practice reps not reported!**
 - At days 3 & 7 many athletes met diagnostic criteria for rhabdo, but athletes were asymptomatic

Context: more from football

- Ehlers, Ball & Liston (2002) monitored CK during 2-a-day camp at Northern Illinois ($n = 12$, 4 sampling times)
 - Average: **203 - 3,272** (range: **92 - 18,823**) U/L
 - Some WR & DBs had highest measurements

Context from multiple sports

- Mougios (2006) reported CK values from large sample of Greek club sport athletes ($n = 483$ male, 245 female)
 - track & field, swimming, cycling, rowing, kayaking, soccer, basketball, volleyball, handball, water polo, tennis, table tennis, gymnastics, judo, taekwondo, karate, boxing, weightlifting, diving, motocross, snowboarding, and bodybuilding
 - reference limits:
 - males: **82 - 1,083 U/L**
 - females: **47 - 513 U/L**
 - *Effects of muscle damage relative to muscle mass*

Note on muscle damage reference limit differences

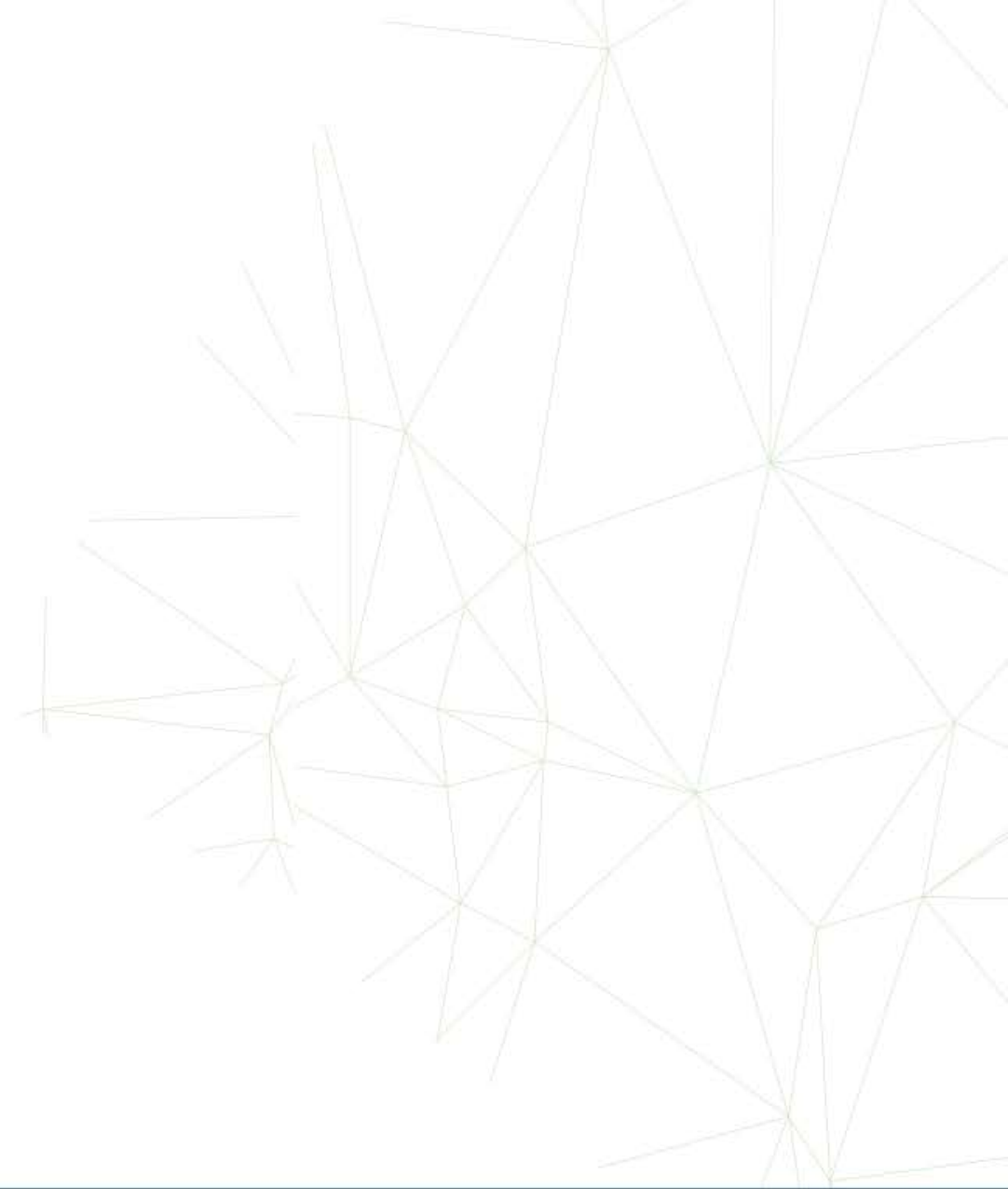
- Reference limits differ by sport (Mougios, 2006):
 - men's soccer ($n = 182$): **83 - 1,492 U/L**
 - men's swimming ($n = 93$): **70 - 523 U/L**
- Why this difference?
 - weight bearing activities with more ECC action
 - harsh **environmental conditions** may worsen muscle damage

Context: What about ... “aerobic people”?

Karstoft, Solomon, Laye, & Pedersen (2013)

- Daily recreational marathon running for 1 week ($n = 7$ males, 1 female) produced CK increases
 - Pre-event 1: **199 ± 48** (range: **75 - 497**) U/L
 - Post-event 7: **640 ± 99** (range: **329 - 990**) U/L

Case Studies of ER



Case Studies

Smoot, Amendola, Cramer, Doyle, Kregel, ...& Herwaldt (2013)

- University of Iowa Football, Jan 20-24, 2011
- Following a 3-week break after bowl game...

Case Studies

Smoot et al. (2013)

Jan 20, 2011:

15-min dynamic warm up

Barbell snatch 3 @ 65%, 3 @ 70%, 3 @ 75%

Back squats 100 reps @ 50%

Sled pushes 20 yd X 5 (sled load: bigs 240 lb, mids 210 lb, speed 180 lb)

Pull ups max reps

Dumbbell rows 3 X 12 @ 65%

Cable push-aways 10*

Cable ab pulldowns 2 X 10*

Blast strap rollouts 2 X 10

* Player-selected load

Case Studies

Smoot et al. (2013)

Jan 21, 2011:

- 15 min dynamic warmup

- Barbell bench press 100 reps @ 50%

- Back extensions 5 X 10

- Ab cable pulldowns 1 X 15 (player-selected load)

5 athletes conducted a punishment run (described only as “extra running assignment”), 3 of these later contracted ER

Case Studies

Smoot et al. (2013)

Jan 24, 2011:

15 min dynamic warm up

Hurdle hops 3 X 3

Hang clean 2 @ 70%, 2 @ 75%, 3 X 2 @ 80%

Barbell incline press 5 @ 70%, 4 X 5 @ 75%

Barbell RDL 5 X 5 @ 75%

Pull ups 3 X 10 @ body weight

Barbell press 3 X 10 @ 60%

Case Studies

Smoot et al. (2013)

- On Jan 24, 3 players (19-21 y.o.) reported to ATC with 3-day history of dark urine, severe muscle soreness & swelling
 - CK range **166,991 - 233,167** U/L
- ATCs saw 13 total cases
 - 10 athletes permitted researchers to view medical records
 - CK range **96,987 – 331,044** U/L
- Survey issued to athletes
 - No relationship between injury & size, position, training history, etc.
 - Some athletes did extra squats
- Noted possible protective effect of drinking protein shakes...

Fallout from the Iowa case...

\$15,000 legal settlement to one athlete (AP, 2016)

Case Studies

Moeckel-Cole & Clarkson (2009)

- Reported ER in a 18 y.o. D-I football placekicker
- Brought on by late summer training led by S&C coach
- The workout:
 - 10 sets of 30 shoulder-band squats (300 reps) with 60s rest between sets
 - No reference to band thickness
 - 30 RDLs using 40-lb dumbbells
 - 30 shrugs using 80-lb dumbbells
- Severe pain presented in quadriceps afterward, difficulty walking the following day
- CK **130,899** U/L upon hospital admission (8 days in hospital)

Case Studies

Shelmadine, Baltensparger, Winson & Bowden (2013)

- 19 y.o. SCT college football player (lineman) diagnosed with ER & heat exhaustion following preseason conditioning test
- Test consisted of 5 X 300 m intervals in > 100° F (4:15pm)
 - Collapsed upon completion
 - Severe muscle pain, cramps, weakness, etc.
 - Hospitalized, CK **408,545** U/L on Day 2, placed on blood dialysis
 - CK values peaked at **880,000** U/L on Day 4

Case Studies

Anzalone, Green, Buja, Sanchez, ...& Eichner (2010)

- 19-y.o. SCT college football player in TX
- Late Sept, 4pm 30-min lift, then ran outdoors in 76° F
- Ran 16 X 100 yd
 - Rest 1 min for 1st 4, rest 2 min between next 4, 1 min between last 8
 - Some reports suggested he lagged behind others and was encouraged to continue
 - Collapsed after, given IV fluids by ATCs, lost consciousness
 - Taken to hospital by EMTs, died in hospital 15 h later
 - SCT not known to athlete or family
 - autopsy showed sickling-related rhabdo

Case Studies

Oh, Laidler, Fiala, & Hedberg (2012)

- Aug 17-18, 2010 HS football team from McMinnville HS, Oregon
- 22/43 athletes were diagnosed with ER following a football team-building event, 12 of them hospitalized
- Alternated chair dips and push ups each for 30s, 20s, 10s, 7s, 5s with no rest in hot room, estimated 20-25 min of work for team
 - \approx 4 sets each
- Incorrect performances became group punishment
- Reported symptoms 1-3d following workout, pain, weakness, dark urine
- Diagnostic CK threshold used was $>2,320$ U/L (range **2,434 - 42,000**)
- 3 athletes diagnosed with triceps compartment syndrome, underwent fasciotomy

Case Studies

Stanfa, Silles, Cooper, Arena, Landis-Piwowar,... & Hew-Butler (2017)

- March, 2014 D-I swimmers after 1-week off following league championship
- Week 2 of training 13 swimmers contracted ER, 6 of them hospitalized, male & female
- 3d consecutive workouts prior, $\geq 5,000$ m swimming daily + circuit training (no details)
- ER-inducing event occurred on training day 9

Case Studies

Stanfa et al. (2017)

- Novel “team building” competition
- Teams of 3, goal = beat other groups
 - 2 cycles through:
 - Max pull ups
 - Max rows
 - Max bench press
 - 2 groups tied, entered tiebreaker round (details not disclosed)
 - During tiebreaker round, other groups alternated push ups and isometric arm holds horizontal & perpendicular to floor (further details not disclosed)
- Followed by 5,000m swim
- CK values **73 - >20,000 U/L**
- 6 swimmers hospitalized were “exceptionally motivated”
- Authors linked ER with recovery beverage intake (all 6 had >50% recommended intake of protein shake)

Insufficiently Descriptive Case Studies

Galvez, Stacy, & Howley (2008)

University of South Carolina Swimming, fall conditioning

- Day 1 workout: alternating 1-min of push ups and body weight squats for 10 mins, then swim practice (no details)
- Day 2 workout: 40-minute weight training circuit (no details), swim practice
- Day 3 workout: max pull ups, unclear ab exercises including “tripods” & bridges, then swim practice (no details)
 - Athletes presented between Days 1-7
 - 7 athletes diagnosed with ER, severe pain & swelling in triceps & pectorals, dark urine
 - CK range: **30,524 - 81,795** U/L (female) & **38,400 - 157,700** U/L (male)

Insufficiently Descriptive Case Studies

Cleary, Sadowski, Lee, Miller, & Nichols (2011)

- 16 y.o. high school wrestler in Hawaii, no info on training history
- Day 1: out of camp due to unrelated concussion
- Day 2: 60-minutes of circuit training including wall-sits, squats, sit ups, push ups, lunges, plyometric jumps (played catch up for Day 1 absence)
 - Limited water breaks in training
- Day 3: undisclosed volume of running in practice
- Day 4: presented to ATC with severe bilateral quad pain
- Day 5: practiced with pain, stiffness, difficulty walking
- Day 6: admitted to hospital, peak CK **146,340** U/L

Insufficiently Descriptive Case Studies

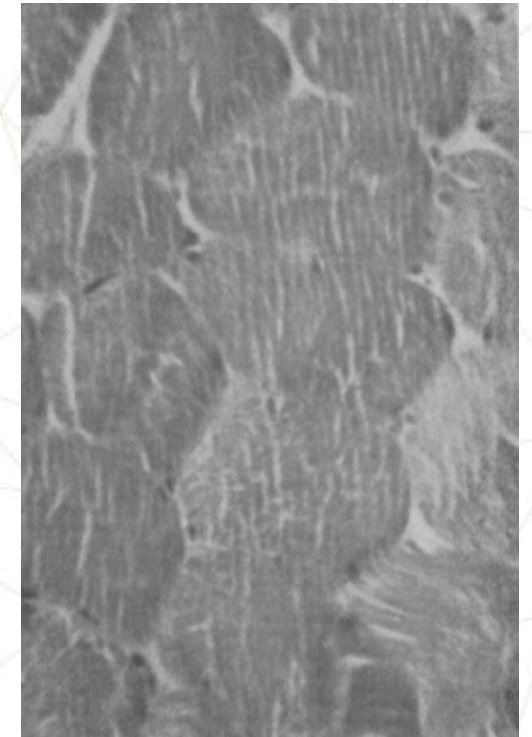
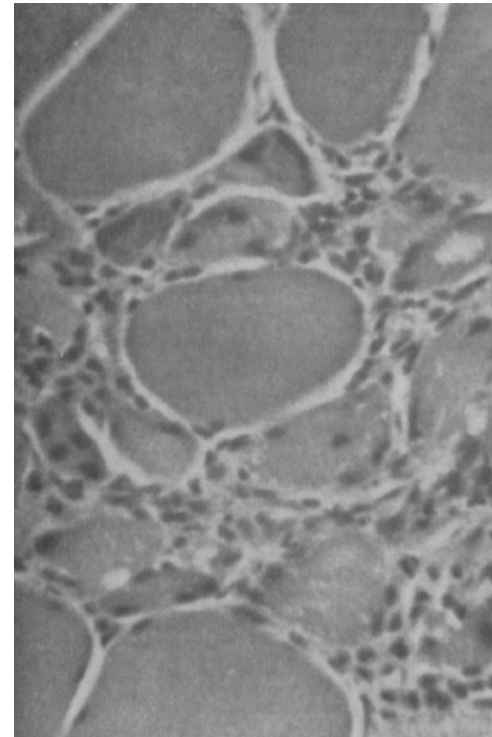
Register, Mihalik, Hirth, & Brickner (2006)

- D-I female lacrosse players at UNC ($n = 8$, 18-22 y.o.)
- No details about other activities
- First workout back from summer break (most reported no training)
 - Precipitous aspect of workout reported to be:
 - 3 X 20 biceps curls with 15 lb or 10 lb dumbbells
 - CK range: **4,287 – 20,247** U/L

Insufficiently Descriptive Case Studies

Greenberg & Arneson, 1967

- Officer Commissioning School, Ft Benning, GA
- Trainee contracted ER from ~200 push ups in 1.5 - 2 h on Day 2
 - Pain & swelling in pecs & arms
 - Muscle biopsies taken
- 23/586 trainees contracted ER
- Further reduced ER occurrence by ensuring TIs implement progressive activity w/rest



Cross-sectional view of triceps biopsies taken after ER & 3 mo after

Insufficiently Descriptive Case Studies

Oh, Arter, Tiglao, & Larson (2015)

- Reviewed military injury database for ER injuries 2010-2012 at Tripler Army Medical Center (HI)
- 30 cases identified (not associated with toxins, heat illness, etc.)
- Resulted from
 - Military-style physical training & ruck marches (40%)
 - Nonspecific training including martial arts (43%)
 - High volume training from crossfit ($n = 4$) and P90X ($n = 1$) workouts
 - One case: 300+ lunges for 2 days in a row...
- CK range **697 - 233,180** U/L

Insufficiently Descriptive Case Studies

Hummel, Gregory, Desai & Diamond (2016)

- Described 8 cases of diagnosed ER at a hospital in Nashville, TN area
 - 7 high school football athletes (inseason & offseason)
 - 1 case combined with heat exhaustion
 - 1 first-time crossfit participant (15 y.o.)
- Implicated ADHD medication (stimulant) and caffeine in 2 cases
- CK levels ranged from **1,744** to **154,000** U/L between cases

Insufficiently Descriptive Case Studies

Borrione et al. (2009)

- ER diagnosed following high volume preparation for Nationals in 16 y.o. male swimmer
 - swimming 5d/wk, 2-3 hr/day + school-based PE (4h in week)
 - CK = **9,952** U/L
- Progressive weakness, intermittent muscle aches, malaise, episodic tachycardia, nausea
- **poorly controlled vegetarian diet** was proposed to be cause
- increased PRO intake & no further issues occurred

Insufficiently Descriptive Case Studies

Eliakim, Ben Zakin, Meckel, Yamin, Dror, & Yamet (2015)

- 17 y.o. “elite” water polo player underwent 2-day military pre-selection activity
- primarily endurance, loaded + unloaded movements
- CK values recorded **98,740** U/L
- Genetic testing diagnosed genetic tendency for ER
 - IL-6 174C allele single polymorphism
- Possible that previous water polo activities (goalie) not sufficiently damaging

...So What If We Boost Recovery???

- 2 case studies exist of ER exist with steroid-using bodybuilders

Braseth, Allison, & Gough (2001)

Farkash, Shabsin, & Pritsch (2009)

- Neither are very descriptive of onset activities
- Purity of “restorative”?



Practical Recommendations & Prevention Tips for Coaches

Key Takeaways for Coaches: Who Is At Risk for ER?

(otherwise healthy)

- Children & adolescents
- Very intrinsically motivated athletes
- Athletes who go to failure with high volume
 - especially repeated failure
- Athletes training in the heat
- Dehydrated athletes

Key Takeaways for S&C Coaches: Who Is At Risk for ER?

- Athletes coming back from semi-sedentary breaks
 - NCAA rules are **part of this problem**
 - Supervised active rest period may be better than nothing at all
 - Many sport coaches don't understand training theory or psychology
 - No accountability of what coaches program
 - Athletic Directors need to be aware so they know who to fire or refer to educational resources
 - 2 of 4 possible mechanisms for atrophy are disuse & unloading (Urso, 2009)
 - post-season = sport-specific adaptations
 - not necessarily loading-specific

A Progressive Point

- The Repeated Bout Effect is demonstrated following ECC loading (Hyldahl, Chen, & Nosaka, 2017)
 - Rapid protective adaptation to musculature seen after first eccentric (ECC) exposure
 - Results in less muscle damage in subsequent ECC loading due to:
 - possible neural adaptations (follow after >12 h)
 - adapted muscle-tendon complex behaviors
 - including pennation angle changes
 - structural remodeling of extracellular matrix*
 - modified inflammatory response
 - Part of adaptation!
- *Also supported by high volume eccentric endurance in Hoffman, Cresswell, Carroll, & Lichtwark (2016)

Weight Room Wisdom Point #1

- Be careful with volume.
- Amirthalingam et al. (2017) compared 6 weeks of
 - German volume training (10 X 10) primary lifts
 - 5 X 10 primary lifts
 - Both programs performed 3-4 X 10 assistance lifts
 - Both programs 3-day split
 - Greater strength gains for 5 X 10 group
 - No difference in muscle thickness (DEXA) between groups

Weight Room Wisdom Point #2

- Dr. Mike Stone:
 - *Highest* volumes with weightlifters have been 10 work sets of 10 back squats
 - Broken up into 2 sessions in a day
 - AM squats
 - PM squats & a few assistance lifts \approx 5 sets
- At ETSU, strength-endurance phases don't often exceed 3 X 10 for primary & secondary lifts
 - Athletes doing other stuff
 - It works
 - Advanced strength athletes can handle $> 5 \times 10$ (i.e. weightlifters)...

Weight Room Wisdom Point #3

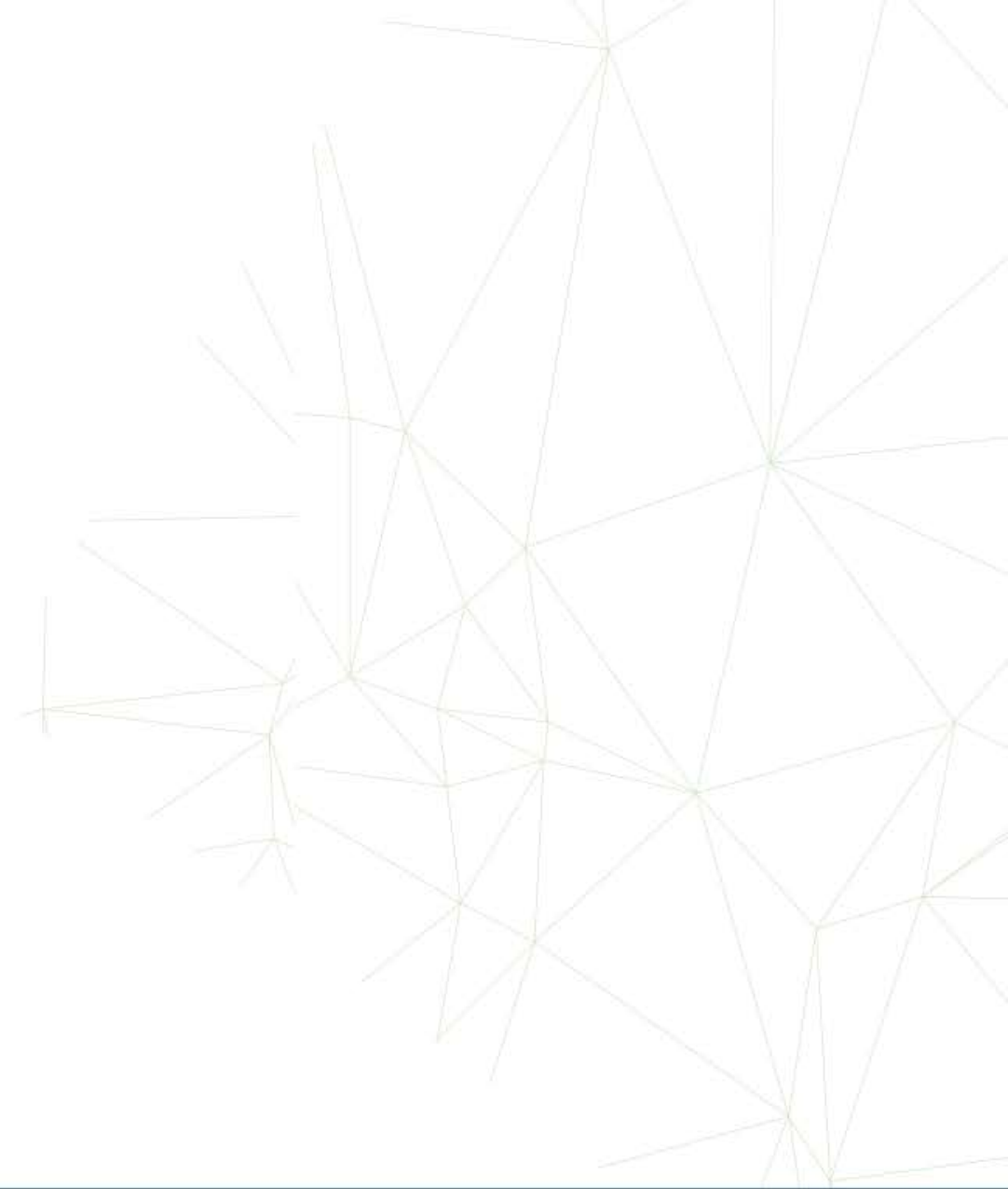
- Be careful with going to failure
 - Especially through repeated failure
 - Remember Selye's GAS...

A Cautionary Note for Coaches

- The CSCS can be revoked ... don't be the first.
- From the NSCA Professional Standards & Guidelines (NSCA, 2009):

“...[An] S&C professional is negligent if he/she is proven to have a duty to act, and to have failed to act with the appropriate standard of care, proximately causing injury or damages to another person.”

Appendix



Recommendations for Coaches

- 1. Do **NOT** punish your athletes with acute vigorous physical activity
 - Acute high density + high volume = great risk
 - If leaked to press, PR issue could get you fired
 - Coaches should not be programming exercise that may be potentially injurious to athletes
 - NSCA Code of Ethics
 - NCAA Sport Science Institute: <http://www.ncaa.org/health-and-safety/medical-conditions/ten-factors-can-increase-risk-exertional-rhabdomyolysis>

Recommendations for Coaches

- 2. Hydrate & Fuel!
 - Smoot et al. (2013) and several other physicians proposed connection between dilution of body fluids and better tolerance to aggressive exercise
 - Is there also a benefit to taking in PRO+ CHO drinks?
 - Anabolic environment vs. further catabolic?
 - Mixed results at this stage regarding reduction in inflammation (Kerksick et al., 2008)
 - Some association in literature of supplements with ER events
 - Immediate treatment for ER = IV hydration

Recommendations for Coaches

- 3. Get information and **use it**
 - Sick cell trait athletes
 - Periodically quiz assistants & GAs on who is SCT
 - Do they know what that means? Are you sure?
 - See Fidler (2012) for review
 - Hydration status
 - Medication status of athletes
 - Many athletes may be on STIMULANTS (ADHD)
 - Requires excellent communication with ATCs

Recommendations for Coaches

- 4. Teach!
 - Your athletes need to know the consequences of partying extend beyond the party
 - Dehydration may take several days to overcome
 - Basketball athletes?
 - Hot climates?
 - Teach sport coaches about case studies to watch out for

Recommendations for Coaches

- 5. Have a plan.
 - Annual plan coordinated & agreed upon by sport coaches
 - Best practice in S&C
 - Chronic damage control is bad for the athletes' progression
 - talk to your supervisor (or AD) if you see a problem at your institution
 - being silent about issues may introduce liability to YOU
 - Any team-building, etc. MUST fit into plan
 - athletes should be prepared for it
 - assume NOTHING about athletes' preparedness

Recommendations for Coaches

- 6. Don't use heat as a “mental toughness” training tool
 - may increase risk for ER via heat illness
 - questionable risk vs. reward – intensity of the session WILL decrease and you may not get desirable adaptations...
 - adaptation to heat should be considered in context of sport
 - (i.e. introduce in late off-season or preseason for outdoor sports)
 - *Do my athletes need this stressor?*

Key Concepts for S&C Coaches

- Best practice: test often and see if your programming works
 - Once or twice a year may not be sufficient
 - Can test & monitor in many ways
 - Are you able to test thoroughly?
 - Do your results support your programming with ALL athletes on a team?
 - Are there non-responders?

NCAA Information for Prevention of ER

- 10 factors that increase risk of ER (NCAA, 2013):
 - Athletes who try hardest
 - Arbitrary programming (not planned)
 - Novel stimuli
 - Irrationally “intense” workouts (high density + volume)
 - Exercise to failure & beyond
 - Fast repetitions to failure
 - Increasing # of sets and time needed to finish
 - Loading as % of body weight
 - Rapid return to fitness goal
 - Using training tools as physical punishment

Remaining Questions

- Why do some get rhabdo & others don't?
 - This requires detailed **athlete monitoring programs** to provide answers
- Some have proposed that mentally tougher athletes are at greater risk—how do we protect them?
 - “Normal” people know when to stop
- Quantify risk increase from dehydration

Future Research Opportunities

- Nutritional interventions following high volume
- CK comparison in Northern vs. Southern (U.S.) outdoor sport training
 - i.e. outdoor football conditioning of similar volumes
 - requires collaborative sport science work
- Effect of recovery modalities on perfusion
- Perform case studies when things go wrong!!!
 - Requires collaboration with medical professionals & sport medicine

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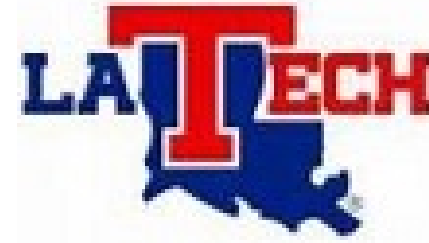
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Thank you!



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