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## ABOUT PROJECT

NUTRI-A project addresses the topic of protecting athletes, especially the youngest, from health hazards by recognising and treating eating disorders. The main project objective is to raise awareness about this problem among people responsible for development of young athletes, especially coaches and other professionals in sport clubs and associations. Furthermore, the project wishes to educate young athletes about the importance of correct nutrition to protect their health and achieve better results in sport. In fact, some researches show that eating disorders can have devastating effects on both the health and performance of athletes.

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONAL

Eating disorders and disordered eating in general are on the rise today, especially in the younger population, with the development of civilization, technology and the advancement of science. New forms of eating disorders such as orthorexia are emerging, and it is important to emphasize that these problems cannot be avoided, especially in young athletes who are under increasing pressure from different sides (media, coaches, clubs, sports federations, parents). The mentioned problem is also on the rise in top sport and sports in general. For athletes, this problem is even more disguised, or more difficult for people close to the athlete (coaches, parents, medical staff) to discover, since the athlete is considered to have to give up many things for top sporting achievement. Eating disorders are common in athletes who often use extreme weight control methods (starvation, vomiting, diuretic and laxative abuse) that have potential health and performance implications. The consequences of these nutritional strategies lead to dehydration

and electrolyte imbalances and digestive problems. Last but not least, diuretics and some nutritional supplements may contain illicit drugs that are positive for a doping test. The project goal is to point out the problem of eating disorders in sports in general. This will be achieved by nutrition assessment of athletes in the participating sport clubs with the aim to educate the athletes and protect them from health hazard during their athletic careers. The main project objective is to raise awareness about this problem among athletes and people responsible for development of young athletes, especially coaches and other professionals in sport clubs and associations.



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## RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

The specific project objectives are to:

1. assess the current situation of eating disorders and RED-S in athletes,
2. protect athletes from health hazards by educating them about correct nutrition,
3. raise awareness of sport professionals by educating them about importance of detecting and solving the problem of eating disorder and RED-S in athletes.

Project objectives will be achieved through an extensive nutritional assessment performed in different clubs in three EU countries, involving 60 young athletes of both genders from different sport disciplines. Assessment results will be then analysed and included in guidelines for the approach to diagnostics and treatment of eating disorders.

The set objectives will be achieved through multidisciplinary approach of project team, composed by professionals from fields of sport education, nutrition, psychology, medicine and sport ICT technologies. The consortium is composed by four organisations, representing sport clubs, non-profit organisation and sport tech company, coming from Slovenia, Czech Republic and Croatia.

## THE INNOVATIVE ASPECTS

- multidisciplinary approach,
- education on the identification and prevention of eating disorders in athletes and staff using modern information and communication tools for remote monitoring.

The fast, reliable and sensitive metrics of ICT tools using artificial intelligence allow non-invasive assessments of autonomous homeostasis. In young athletes, the risk of over- or under-training is increased by dynamic and rapidly changing physiological profiles, but only a few studies have attempted to assess the effectiveness of training using such tools.



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Determining an exercise profile will reveal an individual's ability to resist central fatigue and cope with training. This checks the body's basic reactions to exercise impulses. Among these impulses, it is possible to identify important extreme results of the training profile and compare them with the activities that preceded the results. Based on this comparison, every aspect of the exercise regime can be regulated and improved.

One of the objectives of the project is to assess the effectiveness of guided training in young athletes during the project (18 months) and their athletic performance.

## PROJECT RESULTS

Project results, the Assessment report on nutritional status of athletes and the Guidelines for the approach to diagnostics and treatment of eating disorders, will be disseminated and exploited by all project partners to other sport professionals and stakeholders on local, national and European level. The project is expected to have impact on raised awareness about eating disorders in athletes, helping thus protect them from health and safety hazards in their sport careers.