



**INFLUENCE OF NUTRITIONAL INTERVENTIONS TO OPTIMISE FAT  
METABOLISM AND EXERCISE PERFORMANCE.**

By

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A thesis submitted to

The School of Sport and Exercise Sciences

The University of Birmingham

For the Degree

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

School of Sport and Exercise Sciences

The University of Birmingham

August 2013

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## Abstract

This thesis investigated three commonly used nutritional interventions that are often claimed to alter substrate metabolism and improve exercise performance: green tea extract (GTE), coffee and vitamin D.

Prior studies have suggested that endurance exercise capacity may be improved when fat oxidation is increased through an intervention, thereby lowering the reliance on skeletal muscle glycogen. GTE and caffeine have both been hypothesized to increase fat oxidation at rest and during exercise, but the evidence to date remains equivocal. Using a metabolomics approach, we observed that 7 days GTE supplementation resulted in an increase in metabolites related to fat and energy metabolism at rest but not during moderate intensity exercise ( $56 \pm 4\%$   $\text{VO}_2\text{max}$ ). The metabolic effects of GTE were independent of changes in catecholamines, making it less likely that the often cited catechol-O-methyltransferase (COMT) mechanism would be responsible for suggested increases in fat oxidation following GTE *in vivo*. The current thesis also found that endurance exercise performance can be improved to the same extent by either using coffee or caffeine (5 mg/kg body mass). However, these improvements in endurance exercise performance following coffee and caffeine were independent of changes to fat oxidation during exercise. Consequently, it seems unlikely that increasing fat oxidation with nutritional supports such as green tea and coffee can lead to improvements to endurance exercise performance.

It may also be important to prevent the development of nutritional deficiencies which could have a negative impact on exercise performance. Recent evidence has shown that vitamin D deficiency is highly prevalent worldwide, which is known to have deleterious effects on skeletal muscle function (at least in elderly). Yet to date, little is known about the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in athletes and the impact on exercise performance. Chapters 4 and 5 in this thesis demonstrate that athletes living in Birmingham, United Kingdom ( $52.4\text{-}52.5^\circ\text{N}$ ), display a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (25-hydroxyvitamin D < 50 nmol/L) during the winter. The poor vitamin D status observed

is likely explained by the high latitude and climate of the test site as well as the observed low dietary intake of vitamin D by the athletes. However, despite the high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency, there was no association between vitamin D status and skeletal muscle function or exercise performance (aerobic, anaerobic, strength). Short term (28 days) vitamin D supplementation (1500IU/d, 3000IU/d or 6000IU/d) at doses above the current recommended daily allowance (200IU) were highly effective in correcting vitamin D deficiency to vitamin D sufficiency (25-hydroxyvitamin D > 75 nmol/L). The current thesis also showed that no further improvement to vitamin D status was observed above 1500IU/d. This data suggests that doses above 1500IU/d do not provide any additional benefit to vitamin D status. The improvements in vitamin D status to sufficiency did not result in exercise performance (aerobic, anaerobic, strength) being improved following supplementation. Taken together vitamin D supplementation, at a dose of at least 1500IU/d, is warranted in athletes in the United Kingdom during the winter to avoid deficiency. However, to date the optimal concentration of vitamin D required to avoid the deleterious effects to skeletal muscle function remains to be a subject of debate. Consequently the impact vitamin D has on exercise performance in athletes remains unclear.

**“That which does not destroy us makes us stronger”**

*Friedrich Nietzsche 1844-1900*

**“If you want to win something, run 100 metres. If you want to experience something, run a marathon”.**

*Emil Zátope, Czech Republican Long Distance Runner 1922-2000.*

## Acknowledgements

There are a number of people I would like to thank who have made this PhD thesis possible. First and foremost I would like to start by thanking Professor Asker Jeukendrup for allowing me to complete a PhD within the school. I have learnt a great deal from you Asker. The drive, ambition and passion that you apply to all areas of your research career has inspired my research path and future. I thank you for the opportunities that you have given to me, the skills in and out of the laboratory, the various road trips and for showing me the attitude and determination that is required to succeed as an academic researcher. I suppose you are also responsible for my PhD induced weight loss from a 105kg rugby player to a 95 kg wannabe cyclist/triathlete, Thanks! I would also like to extend a huge thank you to Dr Sarah Aldred as well as Dr Gareth Wallis, who at the end of my PhD have provided support and advice, thank you to the both of you. I would also like to thank a number of academic researchers within the school who have also helped me and been there as mentors at some point in my PhD including Dr Andrew Blannin, Dr Chris Shaw and Dr Kevin Tipton. I would also like to acknowledge the financial support from Unilever as well as helping in the running of the collaboration with the University of Birmingham. I have learnt a great deal from the experts I have been in contact with, particularly Dr Niels Boon, Dr Silvina Lotito, Dr Doris Jacobs, Dr David Mela and Dr Theo Mulder.

I would like to especially thank my fellow PhD student, Rebecca Randell. You have put up with me for 3 years, including my large head and my persistent talking. Thank you for all your help and support, I think we did a pretty good job. Special thanks must also go to Dr Beate Pfeiffer, who gave me the initial interest to excel in academic research, and for allowing me to work with her on such a great project in my first year. Thank you to the EMRG, past and present, that helped in some capacity towards data collection, trouble shooting lab analysis and making those early morning lab trials that little bit more entertaining. Big thanks to 'Lunch Club' for the banter and cups of tea, you know who you are. I would also like to thank past and present PhD students within the school who have been and will continue to be great friends of mine including Oliver Wilson, Dr Sam Shepherd, Dr Matt Cocks, Dr Dan Crabtree, Dr Leigh Breen, Dr James Turner, Dr Mark Holland, Dr Stuart Bennett and Dr

Andrew Philp. I have also been very lucky to have some great office mates over the past 3 years especially those members of office 127, Dr Andrew Cooke, Dr Nicola Paine, Sally Fenton, Cliff and the other fishes, whose names I can't quite remember. Thank you for putting up with my complaints and stress, while still having a laugh, a beer and a cheer. Also, Sally, thanks for keeping me on my toes in the office with the various moulding cups of tea, frequent milk spillages (mainly on my desk) and milk and cheese disaster dish. Decent from you! Thanks must also go to my undergraduate students in the assistance they have provided in the lab, the lab technicians: Steve Allen, Rob Wheeler, Andy Benham, all of the admin staff and the head of school. I am sure there are many others who at some point helped me out who have not been named, thank you as well.

A solid support team outside of work has also got me through my PhD. Thanks to all the lads and friends at home and in London who have been there for me throughout. Big thanks to my family, especially my Mum and Dad who have listened, supported, helped where they can throughout the 3 years, even if they were not quite sure where I was or what I was doing. You have both been invaluable throughout this whole experience.

Last but certainly not least, a huge thank you must go to my girlfriend Tori. Don't worry, I told you you would make it in the acknowledgements! Without sounding like a wet flannel, without you I would not have got through the last 3 years, words cannot describe the love and support you have provided. You have stood by me in everything I have done, put up with all the lab work at silly o'clock in the morning, been patient where most others would not have been, listened to me drone on about science as well as putting up with my geek status. I am eternally grateful.

## List of Publications

### Academic Journal papers

#### Published

1. Pfeiffer B, Stellingwerff T, Zaltas E, **Hodgson AB**, Jeukendrup AE. **Carbohydrate oxidation from a drink during running compared with cycling exercise.** Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2011 Feb;43(2):327-34.
2. Pfeiffer B, Stellingwerff T, **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Pöttgen K, Res P, Jeukendrup AE. **Nutritional intake and gastrointestinal problems during competitive endurance events.** Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2012 Feb;44(2):344-51.
3. **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Boon N, Garczarek U, Mela DJ, Jeukendrup AE, Jacobs DM. **Metabolic response to green tea extract during rest and moderate intensity exercise.** J Nutr Biochem. 2013 Jan;24(1):325-34
1. **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Jeukendrup AE. **Review: The effect of green tea extract on fat oxidation at rest and during exercise: evidence of efficacy and proposed mechanisms.** Adv Nutr. 2013 Mar 1;4(2):129-40
2. Randell R, **Hodgson AB**, Lotito S., Jacobs DM, Mahabir-Jagessar K, Boon N, Jeukendrup AE. **The effect of short versus long term Green Tea Extract supplementation on fat oxidation during exercise** Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2013 May;45(5):883-91.
3. **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Jeukendrup AE. **The metabolic and performance effects of caffeine compared to coffee during exercise** PLoS One. 2013;8(4):e59561.
4. **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Jeukendrup AE. **An update: Caffeine and exercise performance.** Sports Cardiovascular Athletic Nutrition, Pulse, Invited review, Accepted March 2013.

## Submitted

1. **Hodgson AB**, Sanghera G, Hall T, Aldred S. **High prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency in university athletes living in the United Kingdom.** European Journal of Sport Science. Submitted March 2013.
2. **Hodgson AB**, Martin J, Roberts T, Ingham A, Jeukendrup AE. **The effects of short term vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplementation on vitamin D status and exercise performance in athletes.** Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise, Submitted Nov 2012.

## In preparation

1. **Hodgson AB**, Jeukendrup AE. **Variation of respiratory measures with commercially available breath by breath systems.**
2. **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Jagesser-T KM-J, Silvina L, Mela DJ, Boon N, Jeukendrup AE, Jacobs DM. **Bioactivity of green tea polyphenols and their association with plasma metabolome.**
3. Randell R, **Hodgson AB**, Lotito S., Jacobs DM, Mahabir-Jagessar K, Boon N, Jeukendrup AE. **The effect of chronic green tea extract supplementation on substrate metabolism during exercise.**

## Abstracts

1. **Hodgson AB**, Martin J, Roberts T, Ingram A, Jeukendrup AE. **The effects of short term vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplementation on athletic performance.** Accepted for poster presentation at the 59<sup>th</sup> American College of Sports Medicine meeting 2012.
2. **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Jeukendrup AE. **The effect of caffeine and coffee on substrate metabolism and exercise performance.** Accepted for poster presentation at the 59<sup>th</sup> American College of Sports Medicine meeting 2012.

3. **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Boon N, Garczarek U, Mela DJ, Jeukendrup AE, Jacobs DM. **Metabolic response to green tea extract during rest and moderate intensity exercise**. Accepted for poster presentation at European College of Sport Science 2012.
4. **Hodgson AB**, Jeukendrup AE. Variation of respiratory measures with commercially available breath by breath systems. Accepted for poster presentation at the 59<sup>th</sup> American College of Sports Medicine meeting 2011.
5. Randell R, Jeukendrup AE, Pfeiffer B, **Hodgson AB**, Pottgen K, Res P, Stellingwerff T. **Nutritional intake and gastrointestinal problems during competitive endurance events**. Accepted for poster presentation at the 59<sup>th</sup> American College of Sports Medicine meeting 2011.

#### **Invited talks**

1. **Hodgson AB**, Randell R, Jeukendrup AE. **The metabolic and performance effects of caffeine compared to coffee**. November 2012. Invited Speaker at Rank Prize Sports Nutrition Symposium.
2. **Hodgson AB**, **Nutrition of Mother Earth: Green tea**. July 2012. Invited Speaker at the European College of Sport Science, Bruges.
3. **Hodgson AB**, Jeukendrup AE. **A storm in a cup of coffee: The metabolic, ergogenic and health effects of caffeine and coffee**. Invited talk at the Norwegian Coffee Association Coffee Day 2011.

## List of Abbreviations

Acetyl-CoA carboxylase	ACC
Activated vitamin D	1,25(OH) <sub>2</sub> D <sub>3</sub>
Acyl CoA synthetase	ACS
Acylcarnitine translocase	ACT
Activated protein 2	AP2
Adenosine diphosphate	ADP
Adenosine monophosphate	AMP
Adenosine monophosphate-activated kinase	AMPK
Adipose triacylglycerol lipase	ATGL
Adenosine triphosphate	ATP
Adrenaline	A
Beat per minute	BPM
Body mass	BM
Bone mineral density	BMD
Brown adipose tissue	BAT
Caffeine	CAF
Calcium	Ca <sup>2+</sup>
Calories	kcal
Carbon dioxide	CO <sub>2</sub>
Carnitine palmitoyltransferase 2	CPT2
Carnitine palmitoyl transporter I	CPT1
Carnitine via acylcarnitine translocase	CACT
Catechol-O-methyltransferase	COMT
Ccaat-enhancer binding protein- $\alpha$	C/EBP- $\alpha$
Central nervous system	CNS
Chlorogenic acid	5-CQA
Coefficient of Variation	CV
Coffee	COF
Complex cytochrome C oxidase	COX IV
Confidence Interval	CI
Cyclic adenosine monophosphate	cAMP
Day	d
Decaffeinated Coffee	DECAF
Diacylglycerides	DAG
Diet induced thermogenesis	DIT
Deoxyribonucleic acid	DNA
Electron transport chain	ETC
Energy Expenditure	EE
Epicatechin	EC
Epicatechin gallate	ECG
Epigallocatechin	EGC

Epigallocatechin gallate	EGCG
Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid	EDTA
Excitation-contraction	EC
Extracellular regulated kinase1/2	ERK1/2
Fatty acid binding proteins in the cytosol	FABPc
Fatty acid binding protein found in the sarcolemma	FABPm
Fatty acid synthase	FAS
Fatty acid translocase	FAT/CD36
Fatty acid transport proteins	FATP
Flavin adenine dinucleotide	FADH2
Foods Standard Agency	FSA
Free fatty acids	FA
Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry	GC/MS
Glucose-6-phosphate	G6P
Gram	g
Green tea extract	GTE
Heart rate	HR
High density lipoproteins	HDL
High Performance Liquid Chromatography	HPLC
Hormone sensitive lipase	HSL
Hour	hr
1 $\alpha$ -Hydroxylase	1-Ohase
25-hydroxyvitamin D	25(OH)D
3-hydroxyacyl-CoA dehydrogenase	HAD
Institute of Medicine	IOM
Intermediate density lipoproteins	IDL
International Units	IU
intramuscular triacylglycerol	IMTG
Kilogram	kg
Kilojoules	kJ
lipoprotein lipase	LPL
Liquid Chromatography Mass Spectrometry	LC/MS
Litres	L
Low density lipoproteins	LDL
Maximal Oxygen Uptake	VO <sub>2</sub> max
Maximal voluntary contraction	MVC
Maximum Watts	W <sub>max</sub>
Metre	m
Microlitre	$\mu$ l
Micromole	$\mu$ M
Milligram	mg
Millilitres	mL
minute	min
Minute carbon dioxide production	VCO <sub>2</sub>

Minute oxygen consumption	VO <sub>2</sub>
mitogen activated protein kinase	MAPK
nanomole	nmol
Newton	N
Nicotinamide adenosine dinucleotide	NADH
noradrenaline	NA
parathyroid hormone	PTH
partial least squares/projection to latent structures-discriminant analysis	PLS-DA
PDH kinase	PDK
PDH phosphatase	PDP
peripheral nervous system	PNS
peroxisome proliferator activated receptor	PPAR
peroxisome proliferator activated receptor- $\gamma$ coactivator	PGC1 $\alpha$
phosphocreatine	PCr
phosphodiesterase	PDE
phosphodiesterase	PDE
phosphofructokinase	PFK
phosphoinositol-3-kinase	PI3-K
Placebo	PLA
Principal component analysis	PCA
Pyruvate dehydrogenase	PDH
Quality Control	QC
Rate of appearance	R <sub>a</sub>
Rate of disappearance	R <sub>d</sub>
Rating of perceived exertion	RPE
Recommended daily allowance	RDA
Reference Nutrient Intake	RNI
1 Repetition max	1 RM
Respiratory Exchange Ratio	RER
Respiratory Quotient	RQ
Revolution per minute	RPM
sarcoplasmic reticulum	SR
Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition	SACN
Seconds	sec
Sodium potassium pump	Na <sup>+</sup> -K <sup>+</sup> -ATPase
Standard Deviation	SD
Standard Error	SE
Stearoyl-CoA	SCD1
Sterol regulatory element binding protein-1c	SREBP-1c
Sympathetic nervous system	SNS
Time to peak	T <sub>max</sub>
Time trial	TT
Triacylglycerols	TG

Tricarboxylic acid	TCA
Tricarboxylic acid Intermediate	TCAI
Ultraviolet-B radiation	UVB
Very low density lipoproteins	VLDL
Vitamin D binding protein	DBP
Vitamin D receptor-retinoic acid-x-receptor complex	VDR-RXR
Wild type	WT
World Anti-Doping Agency	WADA

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# Chapter 1

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## General Introduction

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Content from this chapter has been published:

**The Effect of Green Tea Extract on Fat Oxidation at Rest and during Exercise: Evidence of Efficacy and Proposed Mechanisms.** Adv Nutr. 2013 Mar 1;4(2):129-40.

**Caffeine for exercise performance: An update.** Scans Pulse (Accepted 2013)

## 1.1 Perspective and overview

Today, there is a plethora of nutritional interventions which are often claimed to improve exercise performance or surrogate measures thereof [1]. Amongst these nutritional interventions there are a small number that are regularly talked about or used by athletes. This is perhaps because of the potential health benefits or ergogenic effects they offer. Alternatively, athletes may use nutritional interventions regardless of any scientific supporting evidence, but rather because they are ‘trending nutrition hot topics’. Green tea, coffee and vitamin D are three such commonly used nutritional interventions, often cited in the literature and used by athletes to promote health and improve exercise performance. Further, green tea, coffee and vitamin D are readily available to athletes in whole foods and drinks, making them easily accessible. The health promoting effects of green tea have been associated with improvements in conditions including: diabetes, obesity, atherosclerosis and cancer [2]. However, caffeine found in green tea and coffee, is cited to induce negative health effects specifically relating to insulin resistance and hypertension [3]. In contrast the consumption of coffee has a number of health promoting effects similar to green tea [3]. Nonetheless, the metabolic and physiological similarities and differences between caffeine and coffee are yet to be determined, despite coffee being the predominant source of caffeine in an athlete’s diet [4]. It has been proposed that green tea and caffeine augments fat metabolism [2, 5], which would be beneficial to health, and may also be important for athletic performance [6]. However, there is very little evidence to show that green tea increases fat oxidation, particularly during exercise. Further, while there is a great deal of evidence that explores the metabolic and ergogenic effects of caffeine, there is a paucity of evidence for the role of coffee improving athletic performance [5].

Vitamin D has been associated with benefits to mortality, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and other chronic diseases [7], in addition to its well known role in the maintenance of bone health throughout the life span [8]. Vitamin D has also been associated with improvements in skeletal muscle function, structure and composition [9] and could thus affect exercise performance [10]. However, evidence of the role of vitamin D in exercise performance is further exacerbated by the fact vitamin D deficiency

is high prevalent worldwide today [11]. The prevalence of vitamin D deficiency as well as the role of vitamin D on muscle function and exercise performance in athletes remains to be investigated.

Gaining a better comprehensive understanding of the metabolic and physiological effects of green tea, coffee and vitamin D is important to decide whether or not these nutritional interventions are important for athletes to improve exercise performance. Therefore, the studies in this thesis present data on the effects of green tea, coffee, and vitamin D in the context of endurance exercise.

## **1.2 Substrate utilisation for endurance exercise performance**

Endurance exercise performance is partly determined by the supply and resynthesis of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) through aerobic and anaerobic metabolism. Fat and carbohydrate are the two major substrates that are responsible for the resynthesis of ATP during exercise [12]. This is particularly obvious when exercise duration increases beyond a couple of minutes [13].

It has been known since the turn of the century that both carbohydrate and fat are fuels used in the skeletal muscle at varying contributions at rest and during exercise [12, 14]. This early work showed using the respiratory exchange ratio (RER) that at rest, fat was the predominant substrate, while during exercise there appeared to be an increased contribution of carbohydrate. The contribution of carbohydrate was increased at higher exercise intensities ( $>65\%$   $\text{VO}_2$  max), over shorter exercise durations and following a high carbohydrate diet [12, 14]. Under these conditions, there was a concomitant decrease in fat oxidation. Numerous other studies have also shown that the utilisation of fat and carbohydrate during exercise is also determined by dietary intake of macronutrients [15-18], gender [19], metabolic health [20] and training status [12, 21-25].

More recently, the early work by Krogh and Lindhard [14] and Christensen and Hansen [12] has been confirmed by Romijn et al [26] and van Loon et al [27] using isotope tracer methodology. Both authors showed that carbohydrate oxidation increased as exercise intensity rose (25-85%  $\text{VO}_2$  max), while fat oxidation peaked at moderate exercise intensity (50-65%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) when compared to the lower and higher exercise intensities. Similarly, Achten et al [28] performed a well controlled study to

elucidate the exact intensity in which maximal fat oxidation rates occurred (FatMax). It was observed that during graded cycling exercise FatMax was at  $64 \pm 4$  %  $\text{VO}_2$  max in moderately trained men, with a steep reduction in fat oxidation and a large increase in carbohydrate oxidation as the exercise intensity increased. However, while carbohydrate oxidation is the predominant substrate during higher exercise intensity, it is important to highlight that the store of glycogen (skeletal muscle and liver) is small when compared to the stores of fat in the human body (1785-2000 kcal and 80,000-140,000 kcal, respectively) [29]. As a result skeletal muscle glycogen depletion can occur when exercise is performed at higher exercise intensities ( $>70\%$   $\text{VO}_2$  max) [30, 31], which also coincides with the onset of fatigue [6, 32]. Interestingly, altering the provision of skeletal muscle glycogen has been shown to dictate fuel selection and consequently endurance exercise capacity. The seminal work by Bergstrom et al [32] illustrated that carbohydrate feeding was able to increase pre exercise muscle glycogen content which led to a delayed onset of fatigue. Furthermore, Coggan et al [31] showed that carbohydrate feeding during high intensity exercise ( $70\%$   $\text{VO}_2$  max) to fatigue, significantly increased carbohydrate oxidation, endurance exercise capacity as well as elevated skeletal muscle glycogen at the termination of exercise when compared to placebo. In addition, increasing the supply of fatty acids (FA) during exercise, through intra lipid-heparin infusions [33, 34] or more recently through the feeding of a high fat/low CHO diet [15-18], has been reported to increase fat oxidation and spare skeletal muscle glycogen during high intensity exercise ( $>70\%$   $\text{VO}_2$  max). Augmenting the availability of FA, while also reducing carbohydrate availability and oxidation, is a highly effective strategy to optimise fat oxidation during exercise. Therefore, identifying nutritional interventions that are capable of augmenting FA availability and oxidation would be of interest to athletes in the hope of improving endurance exercise performance.

### **1.3 Regulatory factors of fat metabolism during endurance exercise**

Fat oxidation is predominantly dependent on the exercise intensity and duration which regulates the utilisation of multiple fat sources. The predominant store of fat is triacylglycerols (TG) found in subcutaneous and visceral adipose tissue, with smaller stores found within skeletal muscle fibres as

intramuscular triacylglycerol (IMTG) and in between muscle fibres (extramuscular TG) [29]. Through the process of lipolysis, FA can be released from TG which is transported in the blood bound to albumin or incorporated into lipoproteins (chylomicrons, very-low-density lipoproteins (VLDL), low-density lipoproteins (LDL), intermediate-density lipoproteins (IDL) and high-density lipoproteins (HDL)). Romijn et al [26] revealed that by using stable isotope methodology ([6,6-<sup>2</sup>H<sub>2</sub>] glucose and [<sup>2</sup>H<sub>2</sub>] palmitate) FA rate of disappearance ( $R_d$ ), which was assumed to equal oxidation, peaked at 65%  $VO_2$  max when compared to 25% and 85%  $VO_2$  max. Additionally, it was shown that fat oxidation was mainly driven by the oxidation of FA at low and moderate exercise intensities (25 and 44%  $VO_2$  max, respectively) when compared to other fat sources including intramuscular plus lipoprotein derived TG (IMTG). These data were later confirmed by van Loon et al [27] who also implemented a stable isotope methodology ([6,6-<sup>2</sup>H<sub>2</sub>] glucose and [U-<sup>13</sup>C] palmitate) by accurately measuring FA oxidation from <sup>13</sup>CO<sub>2</sub> in expired air. Similarly, FA oxidation peaked at 57%  $VO_2$  max compared to 44% and 72%  $VO_2$  max, but FA oxidation was significantly reduced at the highest exercise intensity when compared to the other intensities. Hence, the work by van Loon et al [27] and Romijn et al [26] clearly illustrate that sources of fat in the human body are highly regulated by the intensity of exercise. The availability of FA and their subsequent oxidation appears to be the predominant substrate used during exercise, especially at low to moderate exercise intensities. However, before FA can be oxidised in the mitochondria, they must first be released from the adipose tissue, be transported in the circulation to the skeletal muscle, be taken up and transported across the cytoplasm of the skeletal muscle, released from IMTG, before then being transported across the inner and outer mitochondrial membranes [35]. These steps may be regulatory components responsible for the limitations that are observed in fat oxidation during exercise at varying exercise intensity. Having a better understanding of the regulatory components of fat oxidation during exercise, as well as the specific mechanisms of each, may be advantageous when developing novel nutritional interventions that may be able to augment fat oxidation

### 1.3.1 Fatty acid metabolism during exercise

FA metabolism includes the release, transport in the circulation and uptake of FA from adipose tissue into the skeletal muscle. It is these regulatory components that may limit fat oxidation rates across varying exercise intensities, particularly when exercise is performed at high intensity ( $>70\%$   $\text{VO}_2$  max) [26, 27].

#### 1.3.1.1 Fatty acid release into the circulation during exercise

Lipolysis is the process in which FA and glycerol are liberated from TG through lipase enzymes namely: hormone sensitive lipase (HSL), adipose triacylglycerol lipase (ATGL) and monoacylglycerol lipase (MGL) [36]. The activity of these lipase enzymes are controlled by the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), through the stimulatory action of catecholamines on  $\beta$ -adrenergic receptors [37]. Lipolysis is inhibited by insulin, via its prevention of the phosphorylation of HSL [38]. It has also been shown that lactate, formed as a consequence of increased rates of glycolysis, may also reduce FA release from the adipose tissue. Boyd et al [39] showed that whole body FA and glycerol release during low intensity exercise ( $40\%$   $\text{VO}_2$  max) was reduced when sodium lactate was infused in males. Additionally, FA release from perfused dog abdominal fat pads when exposed to high lactate concentrations were also shown to be reduced [40].

These regulatory steps to lipolysis provide evidence for the greater  $R_a$  of FA from the rest to exercise transition, the continued increase in  $R_a$  during graded exercise [26, 27, 41] and the subsequent reduction in FA  $R_a$ , firstly at high exercise intensities due to higher glycolytic rate and secondly due to the rise in insulin with carbohydrate feeding [25, 42, 43]. Collectively this supports carbohydrate oxidation having a reciprocal regulation on fat oxidation during exercise. This is in contrast to the traditional glucose-FA cycle hypothesis proposed by Randle and Co-workers [44]. The subsequent reduction in FA release and oxidation at higher exercise intensities or following carbohydrate feeding has been shown to be somewhat diminished when FA concentrations have been restored through lipid-heparin infusions. Romijn et al [33] showed that increasing the availability of FA during high intensity

exercise (85%  $\text{VO}_2$  max), to a similar concentration observed at moderate exercise intensities, partially increased fat oxidation by 27%. Horowitz et al [43] illustrated that carbohydrate feeding suppressed lipolysis and fat oxidation during exercise which was rescued by 30% when FA concentrations were increased using an intra-lipid heparin infusion. This evidence shows FA release and availability during exercise appear to be an important factor in maintaining fat oxidation. But other factors inherent in the skeletal muscle have also been identified as responsible for regulating FA oxidation, which will be discussed below.

Increasing lipolysis through greater circulating catecholamine concentrations may be advantageous to increasing fat oxidation during exercise. In support, Mora-Rodriguez et al [45] reported that increasing the adrenaline concentrations during low intensity exercise (25%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) resulted in a progressive elevation in lipolysis, measured as glycerol  $R_a$ . However, adrenaline infusion at medium and high concentrations during low intensity exercise led to a significant reduction in FA oxidation when compared to a control trial. This firstly illustrates that catecholamine concentrations are highly controlled during exercise to ensure lipolysis matches FA oxidation and secondly supports the fact that catecholamines are also responsible for stimulating glycogenolysis and glycolysis during exercise [46]. Catecholamines only stimulate glycogenolysis under high exercise intensities when combined with an elevation in 5'adenosine monophosphate activated protein kinase (AMPK) [47]. The rise in AMPK occurs when ATP utilisation increases or ATP synthesis reduces leading to an increase in AMP:ATP ratio. *In vivo* this change in energy status ratio occurs under higher exercise intensity and durations [48, 49]. Mora-Rodriguez et al [45] did however see a small significant increase in FA oxidation during the late stages of low intensity exercise when small increases in catecholamines were induced.

Collectively this evidence suggests that identifying nutritional interventions that are capable of augmenting FA availability and inducing changes to the sympathetic nervous system may be effective in augmenting fat oxidation.

### **1.3.1.2 Fatty acid uptake into the skeletal muscle during exercise**

Before FA can enter the mitochondria for oxidation they first must pass through endothelium, interstitial space, plasma membrane, cytoplasm and mitochondrial membranes [50]. It was originally believed that FA could diffuse through membranes and there was a linear relationship between release, uptake and oxidation of FAs [51]. However, it was shown that the uptake of FA into the skeletal muscle at rest and during exercise can become saturated [52], and could potentially limit FA supply for oxidation.

A number of transport proteins found in the plasma membrane of skeletal muscle are responsible for the uptake and transport of FA. However, the exact mechanisms that regulate the transport proteins, particularly at higher exercise intensities when FA oxidation is limited, remains to be elucidated. These transport proteins include: fatty acid binding protein found in the plasma membrane (FABPpm), fatty acid transport proteins (FATP1 and FATP4), fatty acid translocase (FAT/CD36) and fatty acid transport protein in the cytoplasm (FATPc) [50]. It is postulated that all of the transport proteins work in unison to facilitate the uptake of FA and collectively these transport proteins are critical in the uptake of FA. They therefore form an important regulatory component of fat oxidation.

### **1.3.2 IMTG regulation during exercise**

The contribution of FA to fat oxidation intrinsically within the skeletal muscle is sourced from IMTG. This fat source within the skeletal muscle provides a readily available substrate for fat oxidation at rest and during exercise, particularly during low to moderate intensity exercise [26, 27]. Similar to adipose tissue, the rate of IMTG hydrolysis during exercise is principally controlled by the enzyme hormone sensitive lipase (HSL). Adipose tissue triglyceride lipase (ATGL) is also an important enzyme responsible for hydrolysis of triglycerides to diacylglycerides (DAG) in skeletal muscle [53]. Watt et al [54] has shown that HSL is highly active during exercise lasting 1-10 minutes, even as exercise intensity increases from 30-90%  $\text{VO}_2$  max. This suggests that IMTG may be an important substrate at the onset of exercise before plasma FA concentrations have begun to increase. During prolonged

moderate intensity exercise IMTG have also been shown to be important. van Loon et al [55] demonstrated a 60% reduction in IMTG in type I muscle fibres following cycling at 60%  $\text{VO}_2$  max for 2 hours. Others have reported 50-70% IMTG depletion after 2-3 hours of moderate endurance exercise [56, 57]. Watt et al [57] observed a similar depletion of IMTG after 2 hours of cycling at 57%  $\text{VO}_2$  max, but there were no further reductions in IMTG depletion after 4 hours of exercise. This attenuated depletion in the latter half of exercise may be driven by the inhibitory effect of FA-acyl CoA, as a result of the continued increase in adipose tissue lipolysis during exercise [26]. In support, Watt et al [58] reported that nicotinic acid, which is known to suppress plasma FA concentration, caused a significant increase in IMTG degradation during moderate intensity exercise (180 min 60%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) despite a significant reduction in total fat oxidation. This data firstly shows that IMTG are greatly utilised during moderate intensity exercise and contribute to fat oxidation. Secondly this highlights the high importance of plasma FA concentration, rather than IMTG hydrolysis alone, during moderate intensity exercise in order to achieve maximal fat oxidation. This further supports the aforementioned notion that nutritional interventions that are capable of increasing plasma FA concentrations may be advantageous to increasing fat oxidation during exercise, particularly at the onset of exercise. Currently there is no evidence to date that suggests that IMTG hydrolysis limits fat oxidation. Hence, integral components within the skeletal muscle, specifically within the mitochondria, may regulate fat oxidation during exercise.

### **1.3.3 Fatty acid uptake into the mitochondria**

Once FA are made available in the cytoplasm they must pass through the outer and inner membranes of the mitochondria before being oxidised [59]. Long chain FAs are dependent on transporters through the mitochondrial membranes. In comparison short and medium chain FAs are able to diffuse freely into the mitochondria [60]. Long chain FAs are firstly activated by the addition of a coenzyme A (CoA) group to form long chain fatty acyl-CoA, catalysed by acyl CoA synthetase (ACS). Carnitine palmitoyl transporter I (CPTI) which is found on the outer membrane of the mitochondria, is then responsible for converting FA-acyl CoA to acyl-carnitine. The acyl-carnitine is then able to pass

through the inner membrane to mitochondrial matrix by free-carnitine via acylcarnitine translocase (ACT). Acyl-carnitine then undergoes transesterification back to FA-acyl CoA and free carnitine by carnitine palmitoyltransferase 2 (CPTII). FA-acyl CoA is then free to undergo  $\beta$ -oxidation in the mitochondria to form acetyl-CoA.

### 1.3.3.1 Regulation of CPTI activity

The activity of CPTI as well as the availability of free carnitine in the mitochondrial membranes together forms important regulatory components in the transport and oxidation of FA [59, 61]. This is supported by studies that have abolished the activity of CPTI during *ex vivo* muscle contractions, through the use of extomoxir, and observed severe reductions in FA oxidation [62]. Early *in vitro* evidence from rat skeletal muscle reported that at rest the activity of CPTI is allosterically inhibited by malonyl-CoA resulting in alterations to fat oxidation [63]. Malonyl-CoA is produced as a consequence of an accumulation of acetyl-CoA, from accelerated glycolytic flux, which stimulates the activity of acetyl-CoA carboxylase (ACC). Furthermore, a rise in AMPK in animal and humans, from both pharmaceutical activation [64] or alternatively through muscle contractions [65, 66], phosphorylates ACC (thus lowering the activity) and reduces the formation of malonyl-CoA. This gives rationale for the role of nutritional interventions that may be capable of altering energy status (ATP:ADP:AMP) or directly targeting ACC and malonyl-CoA activity.

On the other hand, there is equivocal evidence in humans to support the role of malonyl-CoA in regulating fat oxidation either during moderate intensity exercise [67, 68] or in the recovery period after high intensity exercise [34]. Roepstorff et al [67] reported that malonyl-CoA concentrations decreased in skeletal muscle during prolonged moderate intensity exercise (60%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) which was paralleled by an increase in fat oxidation. However, the decrease of malonyl-CoA during exercise was not different between trials that elicited high and low fat oxidation rates. Further, others have demonstrated that malonyl-CoA concentrations in human skeletal muscle did not change between varying exercise intensities [69, 70] or durations [71]. It must be noted, however, that in the studies to

date mixed muscle malonyl-CoA concentration was measured and it cannot be excluded that differences in local malonyl-CoA concentrations are important for the regulation of CPTI (i.e., Malonyl-CoA in and around mitochondria). Although the importance of localized malonyl-CoA concentrations cannot be dismissed, other mechanistic controls may be in place within the skeletal muscle to regulate fat oxidation, specifically CPTI, at rest and during exercise [34].

CPTI may also be regulated by skeletal muscle pH [72, 73]. Bezaire et al [74] showed in isolated intermyofibrillar and subsarcolemmal mitochondria from human vastus lateralis muscles, that reducing the pH from 7.1 to 6.8 reduced CPTI activity by 34-40%. This is supportive of the increased acidic environment that may occur within the skeletal muscle as a consequence of elevated glycolysis and H<sup>+</sup> accumulation through an increase in exercise intensity [26, 27].

### **1.3.3.2 Regulatory role of carnitine in FA uptake in the mitochondria**

The role of carnitine within the skeletal muscle is vital in order for long chain FA to enter the mitochondria. Carnitine is considered as one of the most important regulators of fat oxidation at rest and during exercise. In support, carnitine deficiency within the skeletal muscle (lipid storage myopathy) has been reported to reduce long chain FA oxidation *in vitro* by 75% [75]. The importance of carnitine is further exacerbated by the role it plays in buffering excess acetyl-CoA, when glycolytic flux is in excess of TCA cycle incorporation. Consequently, carnitine accepts an acetyl group, catalysed by carnitine acetyl transferase (CAT), to produce acetyl-carnitine. The production of acetyl-carnitine also maintains the mitochondrial co-enzyme A pool (CoASH) for continued glycolytic flux of pyruvate to acetyl-CoA [27, 57]. Stephens et al [59] showed that at lower exercise intensities ( $\leq$  40% VO<sub>2</sub> max) free carnitine and acetyl-carnitine content does not change when compared to rest. The depletion of free carnitine at higher, but not at lower exercise intensities, is hypothesised to reduce the availability of carnitine for CPTI resulting in a decrease of fat oxidation [76]. This is not only supported by the reduced FA oxidation at higher exercise intensities [26, 27], but also the correlation

between the reductions in fat oxidation and the depletion of free carnitine during increasing exercise intensity [27].

The importance of carnitine in regulating fat oxidation during exercise has meant it has gained a large amount of interest as a potential target for interventions that are able to manipulate its content. Through a series of experiments, Stephens et al [59] have successfully reported that carnitine content can be increased in the skeletal muscle through chronic daily L-carnitine supplementation, only when combined with carbohydrate feeding (80 g). More recently, Wall et al [77] increased carnitine content in the skeletal muscle by 21% by feeding L-carnitine (1.2 g) with carbohydrate polymer (80 g) twice per day for 24 weeks. The increase in carnitine content resulted in a 55% reduction in skeletal muscle glycogen use and a 31% reduction in pyruvate dehydrogenase complex (PDC) activity status during exercise at 50%  $\text{VO}_2$  max when compared to the control trial. This evidence suggests that fat oxidation is highly regulated during exercise, principally by carnitine availability within the skeletal muscle. In addition, it is clear that nutritional interventions, such as carnitine supplementation, may be capable of overcoming the regulatory components to fat oxidation. In turn this may increase fat oxidation, spare skeletal muscle glycogen and improve endurance exercise performance. However, to date, carnitine is one of the few nutritional interventions to receive extensive research to investigate the efficacy of increasing fat oxidation during exercise. Future research is therefore required to elucidate novel nutritional interventions that are 1) capable of targeting the regulatory components of fat oxidation, 2) significantly increase fat oxidation during exercise.

#### **1.4 Effects of endurance exercise training on fat metabolism**

One of the most effective and documented strategies for increasing the capacity to oxidise fat during exercise is adaptation to chronic endurance exercise training. Both longitudinal training studies [12, 78-85] and cross sectional studies comparing trained and untrained individuals [21-25, 86] illustrate an improvement in fat oxidation at both the same relative and absolute pre-training exercise intensity. The observed increase in fat oxidation following training is explained by adaptations to the regulatory

components of fat metabolism, these include: a greater uptake of FA by a larger number of cytoplasm transport proteins, greater IMTG hydrolysis as well as an improved uptake of FA across the mitochondrial membrane. These adaptations to endurance training are a consequence of the accumulation of specific proteins, induced by an up regulation of gene expression (mRNA). Gene expression is induced by various molecular signals and pathways through physiological and metabolic perturbations from exercise. Recent evidence has accumulated to show that these molecular signals induced by exercise may be altered by nutrient availability [87].

Thus, the interaction between exercise and nutrition may be important in not only maximising fat oxidation but also optimising the adaptations to endurance training. In turn this may develop nutritional interventions, which when combined with regular endurance exercise, may augment the adaptations to fat metabolism. With this in mind, the following sections will provide a brief summary of the adaptations to fat metabolism following training and the molecular signals responsible for these adaptations.

#### **1.4.1 Fatty acid uptake following endurance training**

The increase in fat oxidation following endurance exercise training has been shown to be due to a greater FA uptake and oxidation [21, 23, 84, 88]. In a study conducted by Turcotte et al [21] a plateau in net FA uptake across the exercising leg during was observed in an untrained individual, however net FA uptake continued to increase in the trained individual after 2 hours of exercise. During whole body exercise, Phillips et al [79] observed that 31 days of cycling exercise training led to a reduced whole body and regional lipolysis. This suppressed lipolytic rate is a consequence of a paralleled suppression of catecholamine concentrations following endurance training at the same pre training absolute exercise intensity [79, 89].

The greater oxidation of FA, despite a lower FA release, following training is explained by an improved uptake of FA into the skeletal muscle. In support, FA transport capacity across the plasma membrane and mitochondrial membranes has been well documented. Talanian et al [90] reported that

following 6 weeks of high intensity interval training, FAT/CD36 increased in both whole muscle and mitochondrial membranes. In addition, the authors also showed that FABPpm increased in the cytoplasm and at the mitochondrial membrane. At the same time, it has been shown that endurance training improves the FA transport capacity of mitochondrial membranes, namely CPTI [91]. Tunstall et al [91] showed that CPTI mRNA expression was increased following 9 days of endurance training. This was also accompanied with an elevated FAT/CD36 mRNA expression.

#### **1.4.2 IMTG hydrolysis following endurance training**

A number of studies to date have also shown that the contribution of IMTG to fat oxidation following endurance exercise training is increased. This is principally based on studies that have implemented stable isotope methodology before and after endurance training [79, 85, 92, 93] or have compared trained and untrained individuals [22, 24, 25]. In support, Wallis et al [94] reported that net glycerol release from the skeletal muscle increased following 9 weeks of endurance training when using both isotope tracers and arterial femoral difference techniques. Tarnopolsky et al [93] demonstrated that following seven weeks of endurance training, IMTG content was increased due to a 42% increase in lipid droplets which were surrounded by a larger number of mitochondria. More recently, Shaw et al [82] showed that 6 months of endurance training caused a 2 fold increase in IMTG content in both type I and II fibres, which was paralleled with a 1.6 fold increase in mitochondrial content. These findings confirm that in addition to the adaptations to IMTG hydrolysis and contribution to fat oxidation, the endogenous store of fat within the skeletal muscle is increased.

#### **1.4.3 Mitochondrial enzyme and content following endurance training**

Endurance exercise training leads to an increase in the number of mitochondria within the skeletal muscle, otherwise known as mitochondrial biogenesis. In addition numerous adaptations to the intermediary metabolism within the matrix of the mitochondria also occur. This has been demonstrated by the improvement in TCA cycle flux following endurance training due to the greater expression and activity of the TCA enzymes: succinate dehydrogenase [95, 96] and citrate synthase

[93, 95, 97, 98]. This ensures a greater production of NADH and FADH<sub>2</sub> for the electron transport chain (ETC) as part of oxidative phosphorylation. With the increase in TCAI following endurance training an improvement to VO<sub>2</sub> max [95] and exercise performance [99] have also been reported suggesting that TCA cycle adaptations play a critical role in energy metabolism and performance for endurance trained individuals. In addition, Gollnick and Saltin [100] illustrated that the improved capacity to oxidise fat following endurance training was due to enhanced enzyme activity in  $\beta$  oxidation pathway. It has consistently been shown in humans that endurance training increases the content of 3-hydroxyacyl-CoA dehydrogenase (HAD) an important intermediary and rate limiting enzyme in  $\beta$  oxidation [93, 97, 98, 101]. Endurance training also increases the flux of electrons, from NADH and FADH<sub>2</sub>, through the electron transfer chain to resynthesise ATP through oxidative phosphorylation in the mitochondrial matrix. More specifically, a number of investigations have demonstrated that endurance training increases the transmembrane protein complex cytochrome C oxidase (COX IV) [102, 103].

Consequently, endurance exercise training improves the capacity to oxidise fat by not only overcoming the regulatory components of fat metabolism, but also increasing the intrinsic machinery required to oxidise fat.

#### **1.4.4 The molecular response to endurance exercise training**

The adaptations to fat metabolism following endurance training are explained by alterations in gene transcription that lead to increased expression of specific proteins [104]. The adaptations to fat metabolism are controlled by a number of perturbations which include an increase in AMPK, the transient increase in calcium release from the sarcoplasmic reticulum (SR) as well as disturbances to mechanotransduction [104]. Through these primary messengers induced by exercise, a number of signalling cascades are induced which lead to the up regulation of transcription factors and transcription co-activators, which are responsible for the adaptations to endurance exercise as outlined above. These include: nuclear respiratory factor-1 and 2 (NRF 1/2) [105] and mitochondrial

transcription factor A (Tfam) [106], peroxisome proliferator activated receptor (PPAR)  $\gamma$  coactivator (PGC1 $\alpha$ ) [107], and peroxisome proliferator activated receptor (PPAR) [108].

The up regulation of transcription factors and transcription co-activators as a result of endurance exercise is well documented [106]. More recent evidence has suggested that nutrient availability may alter the contraction induced gene expression and molecular signalling [87]. AMPK is known to be a potent activator to numerous transcription factors [104] and has been shown to be critical in inducing the endurance training adaptations [109]. The rise in AMPK occurs with an increase in AMP:ATP ratio, which is achieved when manipulation to carbohydrate availability during training occurs. This is specifically through glycogen depleted exercise training [110] or high intensity exercise training [81], which has resulted in superior adaptations to fat metabolism (3-hydroacyl-CoA dehydrogenase ( $\beta$ -HAD), FAT/CD36, IMTG hydrolysis and citrate synthase) when compared to traditional training. Similar findings have also been documented when endurance exercise training is completed under a low carbohydrate/high fat diet [15, 17, 111, 112]. Therefore, reducing the reliance on endogenous carbohydrate stores, while at the same time, increasing the availability and utilisation of fat at the skeletal muscle may be advantageous to the adaptations to fat metabolism following endurance training.

Altering nutrient availability can also change hormone concentrations which may also have important roles in not only regulating substrate metabolism but also in training induced adaptations. An elevation in catecholamines, especially following high intensity exercise training [113], up regulates cAMP response element binding protein (CREB), which phosphorylates PGC1 $\alpha$  [114]. In addition, *in vitro* studies have shown that FA are capable of binding to PPARs and increase the activity of the transcription factor [113]. As already discussed, catecholamines are responsible for increasing plasma FA concentrations during exercise. Therefore, increasing catecholamine concentrations and fat availability may also play a role in augmenting transcription factor activity during exercise.

The nutrient-exercise interactions that have been discussed above are powerful tools to potentially activate the molecular signalling for endurance training adaptations to fat metabolism. Performing exercise that acutely alters nutrient and hormonal concentrations may be of interest to endurance athletes. Hypothetically this may suggest that nutritional interventions that acutely 1) alter energy status (ADP:AMP) of the skeletal muscle during exercise, 2) increase the availability of FA at rest and during exercise 3) up regulate catecholamines at rest and during exercise may optimise the training induced adaptations to fat metabolism [87, 115]. However, to date, very little evidence is available to identify nutritional interventions capable of inducing these metabolic perturbations, increasing the activity of transcription factors or inducing adaptations to fat metabolism with or without endurance exercise training. This demonstrates that future studies are required to elucidate this further.

### **1.5 Nutritional interventions to augment fat oxidation and exercise performance**

A number of bioactive ingredients that originate from plants have become of interest for their potential in increasing fat oxidation [116] as well as interacting with the molecular signals that are responsible for the adaptations to endurance exercise training [87]. There are an abundance of bioactive ingredients that may offer nutritional interventions and support to endurance training on the sports nutrition market today [1, 116, 117]. However, the evidence to support the putative claims are mostly equivocal. In a recent review [116] a variety of bioactive ingredients that have been proposed to increase fat oxidation at rest and during exercise were critically discussed. Of the eight ingredients that were mentioned in the review, green tea was shown to be the most promising ingredient to increase fat oxidation at rest, while there was a paucity of evidence during exercise. Furthermore, caffeine which is found abundantly in coffee as well as in green tea, has been suggested to increase the capacity to oxidise fat during exercise since the first study on this topic by Costill et al in 1978 [118]. Early studies showed an improvement to endurance exercise capacity, which coincided with a sparing of skeletal muscle glycogen [118, 119]. However, to date the evidence that caffeine increases fat oxidation and spares skeletal muscle glycogen is equivocal, with numerous studies showing improvements to endurance exercise performance independent of changes to fat metabolism [5, 120,

121]. Surprisingly though, despite caffeine being a well documented nutritional intervention to improve endurance exercise performance, there is little supporting evidence for the use of coffee [122-125].

The importance of examining the role of green tea and caffeine, particularly when ingested as coffee, is that they are readily available nutritional interventions and supports which are frequently consumed by athletes today and are often cited as nutrition ‘trending nutrition hot topics’. In support, tea and coffee are two of the most popular beverages consumed worldwide, with tea being the second most consumed beverage after water [126, 127]. The predominant source of caffeine in the human diet is sourced from coffee [128]. In athletes, similar trends have also been observed. Tunnicliffe et al [129] reported that 70% of Canadian athletes, from a variety of sports, used caffeine before or during training. The average daily intake was  $59 \pm 6$  mg/d, ranging from 0-895 mg/d with coffee being the primary source of caffeine intake by the athletes. Furthermore, Chester et al [130] reported that 97% of UK track athletes and cyclists were found to use caffeine prior to competition, with the major source of caffeine found to be from coffee. Chester et al [130], as well as others [131] have shown that caffeine intake appears to be higher, especially in coffee format, amongst endurance athletes, specifically triathlon, cycling and rowing. Less is known about the prevalence of use of green tea amongst athletes. However, it could be considered that due to the rise in commercial green tea beverages, in the form of ice teas and energy drinks [132], combined with the high accessibility of green tea supplements on the sports nutrition market, the use by athletes may be high.

## **1.6 Caffeine as a nutritional intervention to augment fat metabolism and exercise performance**

### **1.6.1 Composition of caffeine and metabolism in humans**

Caffeine is a trimethylxanthine that is rapidly and completely absorbed through the gastrointestinal tract. It is metabolised in the liver by the cytochrome P450 enzyme, specifically through the isoenzyme CYP1A2 and other isoforms to form three primary dimethylxanthines, namely: paraxanthine, theobromine and theophylline [133]. It is understood that CYP1A2 activity can vary up

to 40-fold within and between individuals [134], altering the bioavailability, clearance and ultimately the physiological effects of plasma caffeine. Following intake, plasma caffeine can appear in the circulation within 15 minutes and result in a time to peak (T<sub>max</sub>) of ~1 h [135], with a half life of 5-30 h [136]. A standard cup of coffee (250 mL) will consist of 60-85 mg caffeine, which will result in an average plasma caffeine concentration of ~7-10 µM [137].

## **1.6.2 Performance effects of caffeine**

### **1.6.2.1 Time to exhaustion**

Caffeine has been recognised for some time to improve endurance exercise performance, with over 40 years of supporting research [138-141]. The seminal work by Costill et al [118, 142] was the first to report the ergogenic effects of caffeine. On two occasions, nine cyclists completed a time to exhaustion (TTE) test (80% VO<sub>2</sub> max) 60-min after consuming decaffeinated coffee (decaf) with added caffeine (330 mg) or decaf only [118]. Following ingestion of caffeine, performance was significantly improved by 15 min when compared to decaf. Costill et al [118] concluded that the improvements to endurance exercise capacity were a consequence of an increase in fat oxidation, which in turn would spare skeletal muscle glycogen. Since this early work, numerous studies have shown similar performance enhancing effects of caffeine using a TTE protocol, for both prolonged sub-maximal exercise (>90 min) and constant higher intensity exercise (20-60 min) (75-90 %VO<sub>2</sub> max) [118-120, 122, 143-150]. A recent meta-analysis, which included 40 double blind studies from a variety of exercise tests (endurance, graded and short), concluded that the overall improvement to exercise performance following caffeine intake was 12% when compared to placebo (95% CI 9.1-15.4). Further, the improvement to performance was larger during endurance (TTE) exercise (20% improvement in performance) compared to graded or short term high intensity exercise tests (2% improvement in performance) [138]. It should be noted that not all studies tested whether fat oxidation was augmented following caffeine intake.

### **1.6.2.2 Time trial performance**

The ergogenic effects of caffeine are well documented when using the time to exhaustion test as the predominant performance measure. However, assessing endurance capacity in this manner may lack sufficient ecological validity to translate results to real life endurance sporting events [151]. Taking this into consideration, more recent investigations have implemented the use of time trial (TT) protocols to assess endurance exercise performance [152-155] which has been shown to be a highly reliable [156]. A recent meta-analysis, only including studies that measured endurance exercise performance using a TT, showed that overall caffeine improved performance by  $3.2 \pm 4.3\%$ , however this improvement was highly variable between studies (-0.3 to 17.3 %) [139]. The ergogenic effects of caffeine were mainly investigated in endurance athletes. More recent evidence has shown that caffeine (6 mg/kg body mass (BM)) is ergogenic in sedentary men when using a time trial protocol [157]. Interestingly, caffeine was predominantly delivered through fluid or capsules with no study using a coffee beverage, despite it being the predominant source of dietary caffeine [128-130, 158].

### **1.6.3 Dose response and timing of caffeine intake**

The dose of caffeine required to improve performance is believed to be between 3-6 mg/kg BM, resulting in plasma caffeine concentrations 30-70  $\mu\text{M}$  [5]. Graham et al [145] illustrated that 3 and 6 mg/kg BM improved TTE (80%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) to a similar extent when compared to a water control. However, increasing the dose to 9 mg/kg BM did not result in a significant improvement in performance. Pasman et al [149] confirmed these findings by showing that 5, 9 and 13 mg/kg BM improved TTE (80%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) compared to placebo, however no differences were observed between the caffeine doses. These findings have also been confirmed using a TT protocol, whereby 3 and 6 mg/kg BM both significantly improved performance, yet doubling the dose to 6 mg/kg BM did not offer any further benefits [153]. It also appears that using lower doses of caffeine (1-3 mg/kg BM) can be effective in improving endurance exercise performance when using a time trial protocol [152, 154,

159]. Interestingly, caffeine doses as low as 90 mg have been shown to improve time trial performance, resulting in low plasma caffeine concentrations ( $\sim 8\mu\text{M}$ ) [152].

The timing of caffeine ingestion may be important in observing the ergogenic effects. The majority of studies to date have provided caffeine 1 h prior to exercise to coincide with the  $T_{\text{max}}$  of plasma caffeine [5]. In agreement, a recent study reported that time trial performance was only improved when exercise was performed 1 h after caffeine rather than after an individual's plasma caffeine  $T_{\text{max}}$  (150-180 min), when compared to placebo [155]. In addition, it is evident that the  $T_{\text{max}}$  differs between caffeine consumed as a capsule when compared to coffee consumed as a beverage [160]. Many athletes have been shown to consume caffeine during endurance exercise, particularly during prolonged events [158]. Cox et al [152] performed a well designed study in which cyclists performed a 2 h cycling bout (70%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) having consumed either: caffeine 1 h prior to exercise (6 mg/kg BM), caffeine in small doses throughout exercise (6 x 1 mg/kg BM every 20 min), low caffeine in the form of a cola beverage (2 x 5 mL/kg ( $\sim 13\text{mg}/100\text{ mL}$ ) at 100 and 120 min) or placebo. Despite the difference in time of intake, TT performance was improved by  $\sim 3\%$  across all interventions. Subsequently, Kovacs et al [159] showed that a variety of doses of caffeine (2.1, 3.2, 4.5 mg/kg BM) consumed in combination with carbohydrate (68.8 g/L) during exercise improved time trial performance when compared to placebo and carbohydrate only. Therefore, the timing and form of caffeine intake may determine the ergogenic effects. Studies show that caffeine intake prior to and during endurance exercise is an effective nutritional support to improve exercise performance, however studies investigating whether these effects are greater or less, when caffeine is taken in as coffee, are lacking.

#### **1.6.4 Performance effects of coffee**

The performance effects of coffee are less clear, despite coffee being frequently ingested by endurance athletes on a daily basis. Since the work of Costill et al [118, 142], very few studies have investigated the effects of coffee or decaf plus caffeine. Table 1.1 summarises the studies to date. Using a

comparable study design to Costill et al [118], Butts & Crowell et al [125] did not observe an improvement in time to exhaustion (75%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) following decaf plus caffeine (330 mg) compared to decaf only. Yet, Wiles et al [124] demonstrated that 1500-m simulated treadmill running time was significantly improved by 4.2 sec following coffee (~2.0-2.5 mg/kg BM) compared to decaf. In addition, the authors also showed that coffee significantly improved running speed in an 'all out sprint' in the final minute of a subsequent 1500-m simulated treadmill run when compared to decaf. These results are difficult to interpret due to the different forms of coffee used (decaf plus caffeine, decaf only) with little comparison to regular coffee or caffeine only. In order to address this question, Graham et al [122] compared the effects of caffeine, regular coffee, decaf, decaf plus caffeine or a placebo, 1 h prior to completing a running TTE test (80%  $\text{VO}_2$  max). All caffeinated trials consisted of 4.5 mg/kg BM. The authors observed a significant improvement in TTE with caffeine when compared to the other conditions. Surprisingly, regular coffee and decaf plus caffeine did not improve performance, despite having the same caffeine content. Based on this evidence, the authors concluded that coffee may be inferior to caffeine at improving endurance exercise performance. A difference in the bioavailability of caffeine or paraxanthines was not responsible for this diverse ergogenic effect [122]. It has been proposed that compounds in coffee may interfere with the physiological effects of caffeine. Coffee is composed of ~2% caffeine, with the remainder being made up of chlorogenic acids, ferulic acid, caffeic acid, nicotinic acid as well as other compounds with many currently unidentifiable [136]. However, it has been observed that regular coffee containing caffeine (1.1mg/kg BM) consumed prior to the ingestion of different doses of caffeine (3-7mg/kg BM) does not impair the improvements to exercise performance induced by caffeine [123] . Herein, chapter 3 of this thesis describes a study that aimed to explore the performance effects of coffee compared to caffeine using a time trial protocol.

**Table 1.1 Overview of the available literature investigating the effect of coffee on exercise performance**

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Performance protocol</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Beverages</i>	<i>Time before exercise</i>	<i>Caffeine dose</i>	<i>Performance outcome</i>	<i>Coffee ergogenic + / ↔</i>
Costill et al [118]	80% VO <sub>2</sub> max TTE	7 M 2 F	D+C v D	1 h	300mg (4.4 M, 5.8 F)#	D+C 90.2*; D 75.5 (min)	+
Butts & Crowell [125]	75% VO <sub>2</sub> max TTE	13 M 15 F	D+C v D	1h	300mg (4.0 M, 5.1 F)#	D+C 68.5; D 63.8 (min)	↔
Wiles et al [124]	Treadmill 1500 m run	18 M	Cof v D	1h	3g Cof ~200 mg (2.0-2.5)#	C 286*; D 290 (sec)	+
Wiles et al [124]	Treadmill 1500 m run + 1 min sprint	10 M	Cof v D	1h	3g Cof ~200 mg (2.0-2.5)#	1 min sprint Cof 23.5*; D 22.9 (km/h)*	+
Trice & Haymes [161]	~90% VO <sub>2</sub> max intermittent sprints	8 M	D+C v D	1h	5 mg/kg BM	D+C 77.5; D 61.3 (min)	↔
Graham et al [122]	85% VO <sub>2</sub> max TTE	9 M	C v Cof v D+C v D v Pla	1h	4.45 mg/kg BM	C 41* Cof 32 D+C 32 D 32 Pla 31 (min)	↔
McLellan et al [123]	80% VO <sub>2</sub> max TTE	9 M 4 M	Cof-C\$, Pla-Caf, D-Pla, D-C	1.5h	Cof 1.1 mg/kg BM, \$C 3,5,7mg/kg BM	Cof-C (3) 25.1*; Cof-C (5) 27.8* ; Cof-C (7) 26.4*; Pla-Caf (5) 26.8*, D-Pla 21.7, D-C (5) 29.0* (min)	+
Lamina et al [162]	20 m shuttle run	12 M	Cof v Pla	1 h	5, 10, 15 mg/kg BM	No ergogenic effect of any dose. <i>Data not reported.</i>	↔
<b>Abbreviations:</b>	<p><b>TTE</b> Time to Exhaustion, <b>M</b> Males, <b>F</b> Female, <b>D+C</b> Decaffeinated coffee + Caffeine, <b>C</b> Caffeine, <b>D</b> Decaffeinated coffee, <b>Cof</b> Coffee - includes instant and filter varieties, <b>Pla</b> Placebo, <b>BM</b> Bodyweight, (x) Caffeine dose provided in McLellan et al study.</p> <p># Absolute doses provided relative to body weight for M and F. \$ Three different Caf doses consumed after Cof *Significantly different to control (PLA or Decaf). + Improved performance, ↔ No change in performance.</p>						

### **1.6.5 Mechanisms to describe the ergogenic effects of caffeine**

Traditionally it was believed that caffeine is capable of augmenting fat oxidation during exercise, which in turn would spare skeletal muscle glycogen [118, 142]. However, due to caffeine's ability to cross numerous biological membranes in the human body [141], caffeine may not just alter substrate metabolism, but also have direct effects on the brain and the skeletal muscle which may delay the onset of central and peripheral fatigue during exercise. These mechanisms of action of caffeine that may explain the ergogenic effects are discussed below.

#### **1.6.5.1 Alterations to fat metabolism following caffeine intake**

Costill and colleagues [142, 163], were the first to propose that the mechanism of action of caffeine was due to a sparing of muscle glycogen, as a result of an increase in fat oxidation. A small number of investigations have since also supported this hypothesis [119, 164, 165]. Spriet et al [119] reported that consuming 9 mg/kg BM caffeine significantly improved endurance exercise capacity (80%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) which was also accompanied by a 55% reduction in glycogenolysis during the initial 15 minutes of exercise when compared to a placebo. The authors also observed that at rest, but not during exercise, skeletal muscle citrate and acetyl CoA/CoA-SH ratio were increased. The authors concluded this was a consequence of the elevated FA and glycerol concentration. Furthermore, the elevated lipolytic rate may have been induced by the significant increase in adrenaline at rest and throughout exercise due to caffeine ingestion. Essig et al [164] also observed a 42% reduction in glycogen utilisation during 30 minutes of cycling exercise (70%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) following the ingestion of coffee compared to decaffeinated coffee. This was also accompanied with a modest rise in plasma FA and glycerol and a 1.5 fold greater IMTG utilisation. However, this only resulted in a 50% increase in fat oxidation during exercise. The finding that caffeine elevates plasma FA is fairly consistent through studies undertaken at rest and during exercise [118-121, 142, 146, 148, 166, 167]. This is both due to the caffeine induced rise in adrenaline stimulating lipolysis [168] and also via caffeine directly antagonizing adenosine receptors A1 at adipocytes to also increase lipolysis [120, 121]. Despite the

greater availability of FA for oxidation during exercise, very few studies have shown an improvement in fat oxidation or a change in RER following caffeine intake [121, 147, 148, 150, 168, 169]. To gain a better insight into the metabolic perturbations that may be occurring following caffeine intake a number of studies employed stable isotope methodology and arterio-venous balance methods. Studies by both Raguso et al [169] and Graham et al [168] showed that caffeine increased arterial lactate and glucose concentrations during exercise, possibly due to a reduced uptake by the skeletal muscle. Both studies observed increases in adrenaline following caffeine ingestion and suggest that caffeine is able to augment the SNS, which consequently may increase lipolysis from adipose tissue whilst also stimulating glycolysis. Alternatively, glucose and lactate may be increased due to caffeine inhibiting the uptake and clearance of glucose and lactate. In both studies, these metabolic perturbations did not result in changes to fat oxidation. A number of other studies have also not shown the glycogen sparing effect following caffeine intake [145-148, 168] with others showing a paradoxical increase in glycogen utilisation [169, 170]. In a more recent review paper, Graham et al [171] combined data from a number of studies that had investigated the effect caffeine intake had on skeletal muscle metabolic changes including glycogen, citrate, acetyl-CoA, glucose-6-phosphate and cAMP. The combined data sets clearly indicated that, despite an increase in SNS activity, caffeine did not alter fat oxidation or inhibit carbohydrate oxidation during exercise.

Thus, these studies are unable to explain the ergogenic effects of caffeine. The studies introduced here have all used anhydrous caffeine rather than coffee. The ergogenic effects of coffee are largely unclear, however as coffee is heavily habitually consumed, it may be interesting to examine whether coffee induces similar metabolic effects when compared to caffeine. With this in mind, in Chapter 3 of this thesis the metabolic effects of caffeine and coffee was be investigated alongside the performance effects of both of these nutritional interventions.

### 1.6.5.2 Effects of caffeine on central and peripheral factors

One popular hypothesis is that caffeine induces its ergogenic effects through its ability to act as an adenosine antagonist, blocking the interaction of adenosine to adenosine receptors ( $A_1$  and  $A_{2A}$ ) which are found ubiquitously in the human body [172]. Accordingly, caffeine has the potential to alter both central and peripheral components of fatigue. Adenosine is considered a “fine-tuning modulator” of neuronal activity which can inhibit the release of excitatory neurotransmitters in the brain [173]. Secondary to the antagonism of adenosine receptors caffeine has been associated with inducing a dopaminergic response [172]. Dopamine  $D_2$  receptors are found alongside adenosine receptors ( $A_{2A}$ ) located predominantly on dopaminergic neurons [172]. These neurons influence motor control and behavioural processes, such as mood and motivation. Caffeine increases antagonism of both adenosine and dopamine receptors, thus, has the potential to alter feelings of pain, pleasure/displeasure as well as modifying motor control [174]. Chronic intake of caffeine has been shown *in vitro* to modify the antagonism of caffeine on adenosine receptors, specifically through  $A_1$  receptor blocking [175] and thus reducing the physiological effects of caffeine. However, while this has been shown *in vitro*, in most studies the ergogenic effects of caffeine are similar in users and non users, with or without withdrawal from caffeine [166, 176]. Consequently caffeine is believed to affect both the central (CNS) and peripheral nervous system (PNS), through adenosine receptor antagonism, which in turn improves the ability and potential for the skeletal muscle to contract [174].

Caffeine has been shown to alter the CNS which may induce reductions to the central fatigue hypothesis (serotonin induced) and central pain during exercise [174]. Studies both agree [177] and disagree [178], with this hypothesis. These differences may be explained by the intensity of exercise, where it is believed that caffeine offers little benefit during high intensity exercise [178], perhaps due to caffeine’s preferential effect in type I rather than type II muscle fibres as discussed below [179]. Moreover, caffeine may also increase the CNS excitability which would increase motor unit recruitment, subsequently improving force during a muscle contraction and power output [174]. Yet, while this paradigm seems logical, particularly based on the central effects of caffeine outlined above,

there is very little supporting evidence to show that caffeine improves motor unit recruitment during maximal voluntary contraction [174].

Concomitantly, caffeine may have effects on the PNS, specifically through direct effects on the skeletal muscle [120, 121, 174]. Tarnopolsky et al [180] showed that *in vivo* electrical stimulation of the peroneal nerve (evoke contraction of dorsiflexors of lower limb) at 20 Hz (similar to endurance exercise muscle contraction), but not 40 Hz, following caffeine intake (6 mg/kg BM) improved force output of the dorsiflexor muscles during a tetanic contraction. The resistance to peripheral fatigue with caffeine has been attributed to caffeine's ability to interfere with excitation-contraction coupling, primarily via an improved release of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  from the SR [181], which may become limited during prolonged moderate- or high intensity exercise [182]. A lack of effect observed at high frequency stimulations (40 Hz as observed above) is believed to cause fatigue proximal to excitation-contraction coupling and may involve  $\text{K}^+$  accumulation. In support, caffeine ingestion (6 mg/kg BM) in humans enhanced fatigue resistance during intermittent high intensity exercise through a decrease in potassium ( $\text{K}^+$ ) accumulation in muscle interstitial space [183]. These findings are in line with the consistent improvement to endurance based exercise performance and inconsistent improvement to maximal intensity exercise performance [184]. This is further postulated by recent data by Tallis et al [179] who used the work loop technique on isolated mouse muscles, showed that caffeine (50-140  $\mu\text{M}$ ) caused a significant increase in power output at maximal and sub maximal electrically stimulated slow (soleus) and fast twitch (extensor digitorum longus) muscle fibres. But the improvements in power output were greater in the slow twitch fibres when it was sub maximally stimulated. This recent data clearly shows that ergogenic effects of caffeine may be explained by its direct effect on skeletal muscle's ability to contract, independent of changes to substrate oxidation.

### **1.7 Green tea as a nutritional intervention to augment fat metabolism**

Green tea, produced from the plant *Camellia sinensis* L. Species of the Theaceae family, contains naturally occurring flavonoids and caffeine. The compounds found in green tea have shown promise

as an anti-obesity nutritional intervention [185]. A recent meta-analysis has demonstrated that long term intake (3-23 wks) of green tea extract (GTE) (with and without caffeine) reduced body weight in obese and overweight individuals [186]. It is thought that the anti-obesity effects of GTE intake may be attributed to elevated fat oxidation and total energy expenditure [187]. A limited number of studies have investigated the effect of short term and long term GTE supplementation on substrate metabolism and energy expenditure both at rest and during exercise [187-189]. But while GTE has shown promise as a nutritional intervention to augment fat oxidation in some studies, the evidence remains equivocal.

Green tea preserves a high quantity of catechin polyphenol concentration (a sub group of flavonoids) due to the way in which it is manufactured [190]. The four main types of catechins are: (-)-Epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), (-)-epicatechin-3-gallate (ECG), (-)-epigallocatechin (EGC) and (-)-epicatechin (EC). EGCG is the most abundant and thought to be the most pharmacologically active catechin [191], with the catechins peaking in the plasma ~ 2 h after ingestion, with a half life of ~ 8 h. The type of tea, origin of the leaves, brewing technique and the source of green tea can all influence the catechin content [190]. A standard cup of green tea (250 mL) contains between 100-300 mg of total catechins and 50-90 mg of caffeine [192]. The different amounts of catechins and caffeine in different varieties of tea are shown in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Catechin and Caffeine content in a variety of tea products, data taken from [190, 192]**

<i>Beverage</i>	<i>Serving size / brewing technique</i>	<i>Total Catechins mg /serving</i>	<i>Caffeine mg /serving</i>
Green Tea leaves	1 g tea leaves / 100 mL of hot water	42-201	25-43
Lipton Green Tea	Teabag / 100 mL of hot water	195-205	32-33
Decaf Green Tea	Teabag / 100 mL of hot water	72-73	<1
Green Tea extract (GTE) supplement	Per capsule	200-210	5-6

In humans, the bioavailability of GTE following ingestion determines the bioactivity [193]. While the bioavailability of catechins is fairly well understood, the bioactivity of each of the catechins *in vivo* remains to be elucidated. Consequently, the action of each catechin, and interaction with caffeine in order to affect fat oxidation, are unclear. The majority (98%) of ingested GTE undergo extensive conjugation in the liver and gut microbiota and appear transiently (60-120 min after ingestion) in the plasma [194]. Conjugated catechins are chemically different to the free catechins (found within GTE beverages) [194]. Therefore, the free and conjugated catechins are likely to have different physiological and biological effects in the human body [195]. Little is known about the bioavailability of the free catechins, that are found at low concentrations in plasma following GTE intake (<2%) [194]. Catechins are also able to pass into the colon where they are catabolised to ring fission products and phenolics acids [196] known as valerolactones. These catabolites of GTE are known to take longer to peak in the plasma (8-15 hours) and their biological effects *in vivo* are unknown [196].

In order to take into account all of the evidence to date that has investigated the effect of GTE on fat oxidation, the following sections have been divided into the effects observed at rest and those observed during exercise. Additionally, due to differences in study designs, particularly the supplementation duration, the following sections will be broken down into shorter and longer term supplementation. These supplementation durations have been defined in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3. Definition of GTE supplement durations for discussion in the sections below.**

<b>Shorter term</b>	
<i>Acute</i>	Within 24 hours
<i>Short term</i>	1-7 days
<b>Longer term</b>	
<i>Medium term</i>	1-4 weeks
<i>Long term</i>	>4 weeks
<i>Chronic</i>	>10 weeks

### 1.7.1 Shorter term green tea intake and its effects on resting fat metabolism.

Dulloo et al [187] were the first to investigate whether GTE could increase fat oxidation at rest. In this double blind cross-over study, 3 doses of encapsulated GTE (270 mg/d EGCG + 150 mg/d caffeine), caffeine (150 mg/d) and placebo (cellulose) were taken over a 24 h period in a respiratory chamber. The authors observed that compared with placebo and caffeine, consumption of GTE significantly increased 24 h fat oxidation ( $76.2 \pm 10.6$  g/24hr,  $81.9 \pm 8.7$  g/24hr and  $103 \pm 13$  g/24 h respectively). Interestingly, fat oxidation rates were 20% higher following GTE when compared to caffeine. Thus, the authors concluded that the increase in fat oxidation, following GTE intake, was independent of its caffeine content *per se*. Using a comparable study design, Rumpler et al [197] showed that a catechin rich oolong tea taken over a 24 h period, (662 mg/d catechins, 270 mg/d caffeine) caused a 12% increase in 24 h fat oxidation rates compared to water. However, the authors showed no difference for a lower dose (331 mg/d catechins, 135 mg/d caffeine) suggesting that a higher catechin dose is required to stimulate fat oxidation.

Berube-Parent et al [198] investigated the dose response relationship of GTE on 24 h fat oxidation. On 4 separate occasions, subjects ingested caffeine rich (600 mg/d) GTE capsules differing in doses of EGCG (270, 600, 900, 1200 mg/d EGCG). All GTE doses significantly increased 24 h energy expenditure (EE) by 8% (750 kJ), compared to placebo. However, there were no significant differences between the treatment groups. However, GTE did not increase fat oxidation in any of the GTE groups compared with placebo. Similar results have also been shown following 3 days of GTE (540 mg/d) and caffeine (300 mg/d) compared to placebo [199]. However, Berube-Parent et al [198] speculated that due to the lack of dose response a ceiling effect at 270 mg/d EGCG may be apparent. In addition, the authors also speculated that the relatively high caffeine content (600 mg/d) could mask the effects of GTE on fat oxidation. A dose dependant response of GTE has been found in animals, when caffeine was absent [200]. Based on these animal data, caffeine may only work synergistically with catechins to augment fat oxidation in small doses (<600 mg/d). In support of this notion, Thielecke et al [201] showed an increase in fat oxidation at rest, in the postprandial and fasted state,

when EGCG (300 mg/d) and a small dose of caffeine (200 mg/d) was consumed for 3 days. For this reason, the exact composition of catechins and caffeine may be integral to altering fat oxidation in humans.

To date, the exact composition of GTE catechins required to stimulate fat oxidation is unknown. In order to elucidate this *in vivo*, a recent study [202] compared the effects of combined (~500 mg/13 h total catechins) and individual (EGCG and EGC ~600 mg/ 13 h) catechins + caffeine (150 mg/13 h) on resting metabolism over a 13 h. Subjects received GTE in small and frequent doses (82-214 mg) throughout this period. The authors found no increase in fat oxidation with any of the treatments compared with placebo. As GTE catechins are poorly absorbed [194], ingesting small amounts, in bolus throughout the day, may result in low plasma catechin concentrations which may explain why the authors [202] did not observe a change in fat oxidation. Yet, 2 days of moderate intake of EGCG only in some (300mg/d) [203] but not all cases (405mg/d) [204] has been shown to increase fat metabolism at rest, as estimated from a measured reduction in the RER. Therefore, it currently remains unclear which catechin or catechins is/are required to elicit changes in fat oxidation at rest.

Recently, a meta-analysis was published to address whether acute intake of GTE (with and without caffeine) or caffeine-only has the potential to increase fat oxidation at rest [189]. In total six articles were used following strict controls. It was found that GTE treatment groups yielded significantly greater mean fat oxidation rates (16% higher) compared to placebo. This effect was not seen in caffeine-only studies ( $P = 0.11$ ) supporting the assumption that the effects of GTE are independent of the caffeine content *per se*. In addition, a dose dependant response was observed with a 0.02 g/24 h increase in fat oxidation for each 1 mg increase of ingested catechins. However, due to the limited number of studies and the large variation in dose, the authors were unable to give a lower and upper dose to elicit maximal changes to fat oxidation.

On balance, research has supported an increase in fat oxidation at rest, in response to shorter term GTE intake. However, not all studies showed increases in fat metabolism (or energy expenditure). The

effects of GTE on fat oxidation at rest may be small which are only apparent when tested in larger sample sizes as demonstrated from the conclusive evidence in the meta-analysis. Therefore, the inconsistencies in the studies reported could be related to the small sample sizes implemented, the exact catechin composition and the amount of caffeine present in the GTE. Therefore, further research is required to elucidate the most effective supplementation protocol to enhance fat oxidation during resting conditions.

### **1.7.2 Longer term green tea intake and its effect on resting fat metabolism**

Auvichayapat et al [205], gave GTE (750 mg/d catechins + 87 mg/d caffeine) or placebo for 12 weeks to obese Thai men and women. Resting EE and substrate oxidation were measured at baseline, week 4, 8, and 12. Compared to baseline, longer term GTE intake significantly lowered fasting RQ at week 8 and elevated EE at week 8 and 12. Harada et al [206] administered either a high catechin (593 mg/d catechin + 22 mg/d caffeine) or a low catechin drink (78 mg/d catechin + 81 mg/d caffeine) to 12 Asian males, over a 12 week period. Using a stable isotope method, (<sup>13</sup>C labelled triglycerides meal), <sup>13</sup>CO<sub>2</sub> excretion was significantly higher in the high catechin group compared to the low catechin group at week 12 compared to baseline. This is indicative of increased dietary fat oxidation. In addition diet induced thermogenesis (DIT), in the 8 h post meal, increased from baseline to week 12 (51.4 kcal and 90.3 kcal respectively) in the high catechin group only. These studies suggest that longer term GTE has the potential to increase fat oxidation and alter energy metabolism.

Long periods of dietary restriction are associated with a suppression of resting EE [207]. Thus, long term GTE intake may prevent this [208]. Diepvens et al [208] investigated the effect of GTE intake (1125 mg/d catechins + 225 mg/d caffeine) for 83 d during dietary restriction versus a placebo in overweight Caucasian women. Resting EE and RQ were measured at day 4 and 32. Compared to placebo, there was no significant difference in fasting EE, DIT or RQ in the GTE group. However, participants used in this study were moderate habitual caffeine consumers (300 mg/day) which may have affected the results as suggested by a recent study by Westerterp-Plantenga et al [209]. The

authors showed that intake of encapsulated GTE (270 mg/day EGCG + 150 mg/day caffeine) or placebo for 12 weeks, following a 4 week low energy diet, only caused a significantly lower fasting RQ for those who had a low habitual caffeine intake (<300 mg/day) compared to a high habitual intake (>300 mg/d). This was also true for reductions in body weight and body fat.

To date there are only a small number of studies that have investigated the effect of longer term GTE ingestion on fat oxidation. Taken together these studies suggest that longer term intake of GTE may potentially augment fat metabolism but only if habitual caffeine intake is low, potentially by overcoming some of the regulatory components of fat oxidation.

### **1.7.3 Shorter term green tea intake and its effects on fat metabolism during exercise.**

During exercise, fat oxidation rates are up to 10-fold higher than at rest, due to the energy demand of the working muscles [210]. But as previously discussed in this chapter, there are numerous regulatory components for the capacity to oxidise fat during exercise. From the limited number of studies to date GTE may be a nutritional intervention that may target some of these regulatory components during exercise. The evidence to support this is outlined below.

In 2008, Venables et al [188] were the first to study the effects of acute (24 h) GTE intake on fat oxidation rates during exercise. In this cross over double blind study, subjects consumed GTE ( $890 \pm 13$  mg/day catechins containing  $366 \pm 5$  mg/day EGCG) or placebo before completing a bout of moderate intensity cycling (30 minutes at 50%  $W_{max}$ ). Average fat oxidation rates during exercise were 17% higher in the GTE condition compared to placebo ( $0.41 \pm 0.03$  g/min and  $0.35 \pm 0.03$  g/min, respectively). More recently, during 60 minute cycle at 60%  $VO_{2max}$ , fat oxidation did not increase following 6 days of EGCG (270 mg/day) when compared to caffeine and [211]. Interestingly, more fat was oxidised following caffeine and placebo trials compared to EGCG ( $0.13 \pm 0.05$  g/min,  $0.16 \pm 0.06$  g/min,  $0.16 \pm 0.05$  g/min respectively). However, at such low fat oxidation rates it makes it difficult to detect differences because of the variation of the measurement. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

In conclusion there are only a limited number of studies that have investigated the effect of shorter term GTE intake on fat metabolism during exercise. The results to date remain equivocal. Thus, more research is needed before more firm conclusions can be drawn. In addition, understanding the metabolic differences or similarities of GTE at rest and during exercise would be of great importance. Herein, in order to gain new and comprehensive insights in the metabolic effects of GTE at rest but also during exercise, Chapter 2 of this thesis examines the metabolic response to 7 days of GTE at rest and during moderate intensity exercise using a metabolomics approach.

#### **1.7.4 Longer term green tea intake and its effects on fat metabolism during exercise.**

GTE intake, over a more prolonged duration, may result in further increases in fat oxidation rates during exercise. A recent study conducted a 2 hour cycling exercise test (50%  $W_{max}$ ) following 3 weeks of GTE (159 mg/day catechins) and placebo ingestion, in a randomised cross over study design. Despite longer-term GTE intake, the authors did not observe a difference in average RER during the first or second hour of exercise between the groups (1 h:  $0.95 \pm 0.01$  and  $0.96 \pm 0.01$ , 2 h:  $0.91 \pm 0.01$  and  $0.91 \pm 0.01$  for placebo and GTE respectively) [212]. However, subjects only ingested a total of 159 mg/day catechins of which 68 mg was EGCG. This is a much lower dose than that administered in other studies [188].

More promising results have been found when GTE has been ingested chronically ( $\geq 12$  weeks) alongside an exercise training program. Maki et al [213] reported that overweight adults had a greater loss in total and subcutaneous abdominal fat area following a 12 week training program (180 min/week) plus daily consumption of a GTE (625 mg/day catechins, 39 mg/day caffeine) compared to a control beverage (39 mg/day caffeine). Unfortunately fat oxidation was not measured in the study. In animal studies, fat oxidation has been measured following longer term GTE intake in combination with exercise training. Shimotoyodome et al [214] found that mice, after completing 15 weeks of regular exercise in combination with GTE ingestion, had significantly lower RER and increased fat utilisation during exercise, than the exercise only group. Furthermore, a 30% increase in running time

has also been found in mice fed a 0.5% GTE diet in conjunction with exercise training [215]. This increase in endurance capacity was accompanied with increased  $\beta$  oxidation rates and a lower RER, compared with the mice that only exercised. Similarly, more recent evidence has demonstrated that the age related decline in endurance capacity in senescence-accelerated prone mice was prevented when fed a 0.35% GTE diet combined with exercise training. These adaptations to endurance capacity were also paralleled with greater skeletal muscle  $\beta$  oxidation rates following GTE and exercise training [216].

In humans, Ota et al [217] supplemented 14 healthy male subjects with a placebo or GTE beverage rich in catechins (570 mg/day catechins of which 218 mg was EGCG) for 2 months, during which they took part in regular treadmill exercise (5 km/h for 30 min 3 times a week) . It was found that subjects consuming the GTE test beverage had 24% higher fat oxidation rates during exercise than the placebo group. A similar effect was found when the supplementation and exercise training period was extended to 10 weeks [218]. In this study, daily consumption of a test beverage containing 573 mg of GTE catechins plus regular exercise (60 min cycle at 60%  $\text{VO}_2$  max 3 times a week) significantly lowered RER compared to placebo. These studies provide an early insight into the possibility that longer term GTE intake in combination with exercise training may be efficacious in elevating fat oxidation.

It appears that in a small number of studies, both shorter and longer term GTE intake has the potential to increase fat oxidation. But this has not been consistently shown. However, no study has directly compared shorter and longer term GTE intake on fat oxidation during exercise. For these reasons, the practical relevance and use of GTE remains ambiguous. The exact mechanisms may differ dependent on the duration of intake.

### **1.7.5 The mechanisms behind the potential effects of Green tea on substrate utilisation**

Several mechanisms have been proposed by which GTE could influence substrate utilisation. The majority of evidence originates from *in vitro* studies, which may have limited application *in vivo*. Such

studies do not consider the bioavailability of catechins in humans, reflected in the dose and form of catechins used *in vitro*. The mechanisms that explain the potential shorter term and longer term effects of GTE ingestion may be distinctly different. Thus, both will be discussed in the following section.

#### **1.7.5.1 Mechanisms behind the shorter-term effects of green tea intake on fat metabolism**

For some time now it has been proposed that shorter term intake of GTE, more specifically EGCG as well as caffeine, may target the sympathetic nervous system (~1-2 hours after ingestion).

##### **1.7.5.1.1 GTE and Catechol-O-methyltransferase inhibition**

Catechol-*O*-methyltransferase (COMT) is known as an intracellular enzyme and is ubiquitous throughout all mammalian tissues including skeletal muscle and adipose tissue [219]. COMT is a constitutively active enzyme which degrades catechol compounds, such as many of the neurotransmitters, by transferring a methyl group [219]. EGCG has been reported to directly inhibit catechol-*O*-methyltransferase (COMT) [220]. Herein, it is believed that circulatory catecholamine concentrations will be greater, in turn increasing the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) [221] thus stimulating lipolysis via adrenergic receptors and potentially increasing fat oxidation [210]. As a result the COMT mechanism has been extensively referenced in the literature, despite a lack of evidence in humans.

The most cited study to support EGCG inhibitory effects of COMT are reported in an early *in vitro* study by Borchardt [220]. Based on this early work others [222] have reported that COMT is inhibited directly by certain catechins. Interestingly, no specific tea catechin was identified by Borchardt [220]. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude, based on this study alone, whether GTE catechins are capable of inhibiting COMT. More recently it has been suggested that specific tea catechins are substrates and inhibitors of the *O*-methylation of COMT in human, mice and rat liver [223-226]. It has been shown that those catechins that possess a galloyl-type D ring (EGCG and ECG) are 100-1000 more potent at inhibiting COMT *in vitro* [223]. Furthermore, it seems that COMT activity is highly variable within a population which may explain the large individual responses to GTE. This may also explain the

aforementioned ethnic differences in the response to GTE [186], as a higher expression and activity of COMT is apparent in Asian populations [227, 228]. What is currently unclear is the specific site of inhibition or where the accumulation of catecholamines may occur *in vivo*.

To date, there is only one study to show an increase in 24 hour noradrenaline (NA) urinary excretion following shorter term GTE intake at rest in humans [187] with other studies showing no effect [198, 199, 202]. Yet, it would appear that *in vivo* the low circulatory concentrations of catechins are unlikely to inhibit COMT, especially in the conjugated form. In support, the potency of catechins ability to inhibit COMT is lost once they are glucuronidated [223]. Therefore, the inhibitory effects of catechins *in vivo* may be lost once conjugated: methylated, glucuronidated, and sulphated which limits the application of the COMT mechanism *in vivo*. At present even if the COMT enzyme was important in the degradation of catecholamines the link to increasing fat oxidation is an assumption that is often made.

#### **1.7.5.1.2 Synergistic effects of GTE and Caffeine**

The metabolic effects of GTE may also be driven by the presence of caffeine in many of the studies to date. As previously discussed in this chapter, caffeine *in vitro* has been shown to affect tissues ubiquitously by indirectly controlling levels of intracellular cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP), calcium and catecholamine release [229]. Caffeine has been proposed to inhibit phosphodiesterase (PDE) activity [229], which is responsible for degrading cAMP a secondary messenger in the sympathetic pathway. The increase of cAMP is thought to promote lipolysis by activating the phosphorylation of hormone sensitive lipase (HSL) [230] which in turn is believed to increase lipolysis and fat oxidation [210]. Once again, there is a wealth of *in vitro* evidence to support the potential mechanisms of caffeine, using supra physiological concentrations (100-6000  $\mu\text{mol/L}$  *in vitro* compared to 20-40  $\mu\text{mol/L}$  in humans) [141]. This clearly limits the application of these results to humans.

It is often hypothesised that the intake of both GTE and caffeine may result in synergistic effects by targeting the SNS, through COMT and PDE. *In vitro*, Dulloo et al [222] investigated the thermogenic effects of GTE and caffeine on brown adipose tissue (BAT). In isolation GTE stimulated BAT thermogenesis greater than caffeine. Therefore, Dulloo et al [222] argued that the combination of both of these ingredients would augment thermogenesis further. In theory, the argument for synergistic effects of GTE and caffeine is sound. However, there is no direct *in vivo* evidence to support it. A number of human studies at rest have shown that GTE and caffeine ingestion has no effect on markers of lipolysis (through changes in plasma FAs and glycerol [2, 208, 231]) or the SNS (represented by no apparent differences in plasma catecholamines [198, 199, 202]). This may be partly explained by the lower doses of caffeine ingested in GTE supplementation protocols (<150 mg ~ 1-2 mg/kg BM) when compared to previous studies that supplement caffeine alone (5-9 mg/kg BM) [119, 168]. Considering that there is little or no evidence that the COMT mechanism is responsible for changes in fat oxidation in humans following GTE (with or without caffeine), Chapter 2 of this thesis also assessed whether 7 days of GTE supplementation was able to augment plasma catecholamine concentrations at rest or during exercise

### **1.7.5.2 Mechanisms behind the effects of longer term green tea intake**

The mechanisms behind the effects of longer term GTE may be different than those that explain the shorter term effects of GTE. The reported increase in fat oxidation, following longer term GTE ingestion, may be explained by alterations to fat metabolism specific gene expression. At present, only animal and *in vitro* evidence is available to support the potential mechanisms following longer term GTE intake.

#### **1.7.5.2.1 Mechanisms behind the effects of longer term green tea intake at rest**

A number of animal studies have shown that longer term intake of GTE results in a decrease in adipogenic genes such as peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor-  $\gamma$  (PPAR-  $\gamma$ ), Ccaat-enhancer binding protein-  $\alpha$  (C/EBP- $\alpha$ ), sterol regulatory element binding protein-1c (SREBP-1c), activated

protein 2 (aP2), lipoprotein lipase (LPL), and fatty acid synthase (FAS) [232]. In addition, others have illustrated that longer term GTE intake increases mRNA expression for lipolytic and  $\beta$  oxidation enzymes in the liver and adipose tissue, such as carnitine palmitoyl transporter I (CPTI), HSL and adipose triglyceride lipase (ATGL) [233, 234]. However, this is not supported by all [235]. Recently, 16 weeks of EGCG was found to elevate mRNA expression of fat metabolism enzymes (MCAD, NRF-1, UCP3, and PPAR $\alpha$ ) in mice skeletal muscle [236]. Alternatively, these alterations to lipolytic and  $\beta$  oxidation enzymes are not always apparent in skeletal muscle [233, 234]. More recently Sae-tan et al [236] was the first to show that 16 weeks of 0.32% dietary EGCG was able to alter mRNA expression specific to skeletal muscle fat metabolism enzymes in mice including: MCAD, NRF-1, UCP3, and PPAR $\alpha$ . This demonstrates that longer term GTE intake may have direct effects on increasing gene expression specific to fat metabolism enzymes not only in the liver and adipose tissue but also in the skeletal muscle.

It seems that the alterations to fat metabolism genes may occur in a variety of tissues following longer term GTE intake. What is less clear is the time course of GTE intake required to induce these metabolic alterations at a tissue level. Recently Friedrich et al [237] observed in mice that EGCG (1.0%) consumed for 4 days resulted in lower liver triglyceride and glycogen content in the post-prandial state. These metabolic changes were also accompanied by a down regulation of lipogenic gene mRNA expression for acetyl CoA carboxylase (ACC), FAS and stearoyl-CoA (SCD1) in the liver. In a second experiment the authors showed that 7 days of EGCG (0.25-0.5%) resulted in an increased lipid oxidation. However, the authors did not assess changes in liver, skeletal muscle or adipose tissue gene expression following GTE intake. Taken together these results suggest that GTE ingestion, even as shorter as 4-7 days, may increase lipid oxidation due to decreased lipogenic gene expression.

The precise molecular signalling mechanism by which longer term GTE intake activates fat metabolism gene expression is currently unclear. It is understood these adaptations to fat metabolism may be mediated by peroxisome proliferator receptor- $\gamma$  co-activator-1- $\alpha$  (PGC-1 $\alpha$ ) [104] which co-

activates peroxisome proliferator activated receptors (PPAR), both of which are responsible for regulating fat metabolism adaptations [104]. However, Murase et al [238] concluded that increases in fat oxidation following longer term GTE intake were not attributable to changes in PGC-1  $\alpha$ . Further, GTE catechins have been shown in some [239, 240], but not all cases [241] to activate PPARs *in vitro*. Lee et al [240] showed that GTE increased the activation of PPAR-  $\alpha$  using a transient transfection assay. It was reported that EGCG and EGC were shown to be most effective. The *in vitro* evidence is also supported by animal data. GTE supplementation of 4-12 weeks has been shown to lead to greater PPAR- $\alpha$  and PPAR- $\gamma$  expression in the liver, adipose tissue and skeletal muscle [242-244]. However, Chen et al [233] reported no change in liver PPAR expression following 6 months EGCG intake in rats.

At present, longer term GTE may induce changes to fat metabolism enzymes that over time would increase the capacity to oxidise fat. However, at this stage, it is too early to conclude whether these adaptations to fat metabolism are due to GTE induce changes to signalling molecules, such as PGC1- $\alpha$  and PPARs. Future human investigations are warranted. However, what this preliminary evidence demonstrates that potentially up regulating fat oxidation with GTE may augment adaptations to fat metabolism. This has important implications for the adaptations that may occur after exercise.

#### **1.7.5.2.2 Mechanisms behind the effects of longer term green tea intake and exercise training**

As mentioned, endurance exercise training is highly effective at increasing fat oxidation [245]. This is due to skeletal muscle adaptations specific to the expression of fat metabolism enzymes and transport proteins following exercise training [104, 210, 246]. These specific adaptations are responsible for improving exercise performance. Few studies have investigated the exact signalling molecules that may explain the adaptations that occur following exercise training with or without longer term GTE intake in human and animal studies. As mentioned above, GTE *in vitro* and in animal models has been suggested to alter PGC1-  $\alpha$  and PPAR signalling molecules which may be responsible for inducing the adaptations to fat metabolism. In order for these signalling molecules to be activated it has been

suggested that exercise is required [109]. It would therefore seem that in order for GTE to activate the adaptations to fat metabolism enzymes and proteins, exercise may be required.

In support of this a number of laboratories in Japan have demonstrated that longer term GTE intake in mice, subjected to endurance exercise training, may improve endurance capacity. The performance enhancements were accompanied by increases in fat metabolism specific enzyme gene expression when compared to exercise only mice [238, 241]. Murase et al [238] observed that 12 weeks of GTE (0.1-0.5%) increased mRNA expression for sarcolemmal fatty acid transporter (FAT/CD36) and MCAD above that of exercise alone. These adaptations were accompanied by augmented  $\beta$  oxidation as well as exercise performance, assessed by time to exhaustion test. Similar results have been demonstrated by others that an increase in fat oxidation was explained by skeletal muscle adaptations [214, 238]. In addition these studies also showed that the highest GTE concentration caused a significant increase in plasma FA concentrations at the end of exhaustive exercise [215, 238, 241, 247]. It could be suggested that the combination of exercise training and GTE intake resulted in greater lipolysis which, in addition to the muscle adaptations, explain the increase in  $\beta$  oxidation.

At present the underlying mechanisms to explain the improvements in fat oxidation following longer term GTE intake are incompletely understood. Although based on animal evidence only, it seems that GTE, when ingested on a regular basis, may cause alterations to fat metabolism enzyme gene expression in the liver, adipose tissue and skeletal muscle. It is also important to note that based on allometric scaling the equivalent GTE doses (3-32 cups/d or ~450-4800 mL/d) given to mice may prove difficult to administer to humans [248].

### **1.8 Nutritional support to avoid nutrient deficiency in athletes**

Despite the studies outlined above, suggesting that nutritional interventions may be effective in augmenting fat metabolism and exercise performance, it is rarely suggested that an athlete requires nutritional supports in order to prevent nutritional deficiency. However, emerging evidence over the past decade has alarmingly shown that vitamin D deficiency is highly prevalent worldwide [11], even

in athletes who spend significant time outdoors training and competing [249-251]. Further, it also appears that for many athletes, dietary vitamin D is an often ignored micronutrient, with reports suggesting that athletes consume well below the current RNI [252-254]. With this in mind, the extent of vitamin D deficiency, the sources of vitamin D in athletes and the impact it may have on exercise performance is largely unknown [10]. However, athletes are currently supplementing vitamin D in their diet from supplements in the hope of gaining an ergogenic effect. Therefore, research is required to explore the extent of deficiency and the effect of supplementation on exercise performance in athletes. Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis explore these unknown questions.

## **1.9 Vitamin D for athletic performance**

### **1.9.1 Photobiology and metabolism of vitamin D**

Vitamin D is a pluripotent fat-soluble secosteroid, produced in the skin via ultraviolet-B (UVB) radiation from sunlight, at a wavelength of 290-315 nm [255]. Sunlight penetrates the skin and converts 7-dehydrocholesterol in the plasma membrane of the epidermis and dermis to pre vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (precholecalciferol) [256]. The pre vitamin D<sub>3</sub> is then converted to stable vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (cholecalciferol), which has been shown to occur within 2 h of exposure to sunlight [257]. The stable vitamin D<sub>3</sub> can either be taken up by the vitamin D binding protein (DBP) into the capillary bed or undergoes photoisomerization to inactive forms [256]. The process of producing inactive forms of vitamin D metabolites ensures vitamin D intoxication does not occur with prolonged exposure to the sun. Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> is then taken up by the liver where it is converted by the enzyme vitamin D-25 hydroxylase (25-OHase) to 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D) (calcidiol) which is the stable clinical measure of vitamin D status, with a half life of ~ 3 months [258]. It is evident that in healthy young individuals, who were exposed to sunlight, a significant increase in 25(OH)D occurs within 24 h of exposure [259]. It has been estimated that a single 30 minute exposure in the sun to the whole body can be equivalent to 10,000 IU (250 µg, 1 µg = 40 IU) of vitamin D [258], while exposure to the hands and arms for 15 minutes may provide 800-1500IU of vitamin D. The delivery of vitamin D from the

sun is dependent on the pigment of the skin, the age of the individual and the latitude of exposure [255, 256, 260].

Vitamin D can also be provided through dietary intake as vitamin D<sub>2</sub> (ergocalciferol) and vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (cholecalciferol) (Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) United Kingdom, 200 IU). Vitamin D<sub>2</sub> is a steroid found in plants, sourced from cereals and fungi products [258] whereas the major source of dietary vitamin D is from vitamin D<sub>3</sub> in the form of fish (200-1000 IU/100g serving), egg yolks (20 IU/serving), butter and fortified foods [258]. Vitamin D can also be found in 'over the counter' supplements in D<sub>2</sub> and D<sub>3</sub>, with the majority of vitamin D supplements in the United States being D<sub>2</sub> and in the United Kingdom being D<sub>3</sub>. Following intake, dietary vitamin D is absorbed and transported to the liver by chylomicrons in the lymphatic system for hydroxylation [258]. However, vitamin D<sub>2</sub> is less effective than vitamin D<sub>3</sub> at raising 25(OH)D [261], due to the difference in affinity to bind to the 25-OHase [261]. The 25(OH)D can be further hydroxylated in the kidney by the enzyme 25-hydroxyvitamin D-1 $\alpha$ -hydroxylase (1-OHase, *CYP27B1*) to the active form 1,25(OH)<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub> (calcitriol) [258].

The traditional role of vitamin D is through calcium and phosphorus homeostasis for bone metabolism and neuromuscular function [9]. Vitamin D regulates intestinal absorption of dietary calcium and phosphorus through 1,25(OH)<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub> interacting with the vitamin D receptor-retinoic acid-x-receptor complex (VDR-RXR) increasing the epithelial calcium channels [258]. 1,25(OH)<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub> also regulates bone metabolism through VDR-RXR in osteoblasts to form mature osteoclasts which causes a release of calcium into the circulation [258]. This process is regulated through circulatory calcium and phosphorus concentrations. When vitamin D concentrations are low, intestinal absorption of calcium and phosphorus is impaired. In order to sustain circulatory concentrations for bone metabolism and neuromuscular function, an increase in the parathyroid hormone (PTH) occurs which stimulates calcium resorption and bone calcium mobilisation, as well as stimulating the production of 1,25(OH)<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub> [258]. When vitamin D is sufficient, PTH is regulated directly by 1,25(OH)<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub> and the increase in circulatory calcium concentrations [258].

Vitamin D status is known to follow a biphasic pattern across the year due to the varying contribution of sunlight exposure throughout each season [262] (Figure 1.1) . Vitamin D is stored in circulation, bound to DBP [256], but also in the adipose tissue and skeletal muscle [263, 264]. The seasonal variation in vitamin D is explained by the cutaneous production of vitamin D which is determined by the zenith angle of the sun altering the amount of UVB from the sun that reaches the earth [258]. During the months of October to March at latitudes above 35°N, little or no cutaneous vitamin D synthesis occurs due to a high zenith angle and low UVB (Figure 1.1) [255, 258]. Apart from the season and latitude, other factors such as time of day, covering the skin with clothes and sun lotion, ageing (through a decrease in 7-dehydrocholesterol in the skin), skin pigment (melanin) are all known to alter cutaneous synthesis of vitamin D and thus increase the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency [258].

### **1.9.2 Categorisation of vitamin D status**

The definition of categorising vitamin D status is complicated due to multiple recommendations currently available in the literature which are based on varying health outcomes. Recently, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) stated that sufficient vitamin D status should be set >50 nmol/L to ensure optimal bone health [265]. In addition, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and Foods Standard Agency (FSA) in the United Kingdom (UK) define vitamin D deficiency as < 25 nmol/L [266]. However, these recommendations have received a great deal of criticism from the Endocrine Society [267] and other experts in the field [268] with higher values (>75 nmol/L) suggested due to the benefits that vitamin D has on both skeletal and extra skeletal health.

### **1.9.3 Vitamin D and bone health**

The profound effect of vitamin D on bone health has been recognised since the turn of the century [269]. In children and adolescents vitamin D is responsible for preventing the development of rickets, which is defined as the weakening and deformation of the bones due to poor bone mineralisation [258]. In adults, vitamin D is responsible for preventing the development of secondary

hyperparathyroidism, which is associated with the development of osteomalacia, increasing bone turnover and increasing the risk of osteoporosis [258]. Rickets and osteomalacia are usually present when plasma 25(OH)D is  $< 25$  nmol/L [258]. A great deal of research has been conducted in order to establish the optimal concentration of vitamin D that is required to protect against secondary hyperparathyroidism, and thus minimise osteomalacia, osteoporosis and fracture. However, the 25(OH)D concentration that results in a plateau in PTH concentrations in humans remains unclear, which is one of the reasons for the argued vitamin D status guidelines. The IOM states that 25(OH)D concentrations must be  $>50$  nmol/L in order to minimise PTH concentrations. This is principally based on evidence from Preiemi et al [270] who showed that the incidence of osteomalacia in motor vehicle accident victims was not apparent when 25(OH)D was  $>50$  nmol/L. Holick et al [271, 272] has recently provided a review of the evidence to suggest that these recommendations may be in part be misleading and the optimal 25(OH)D may be closer to  $>75$  nmol/L. Further, other large scale studies have also reported 25(OH)D of  $>50$  nmol/L [273] as well as  $>75$  nmol/L [272] in order to result in a PTH plateau. A number of recent reviews have been highly influential in suggesting that PTH plateau occurs at  $>75$  nmol/L, which has led to the general acceptance that for optimal bone health 25(OH)D 50-75 nmol/L should be encouraged [274].

**Figure 1.1 Proposed seasonal vitamin D status** (dashed black line) based on correction to current seasonal vitamin D status observed in the UK adults (solid black line) to improve exercise performance.

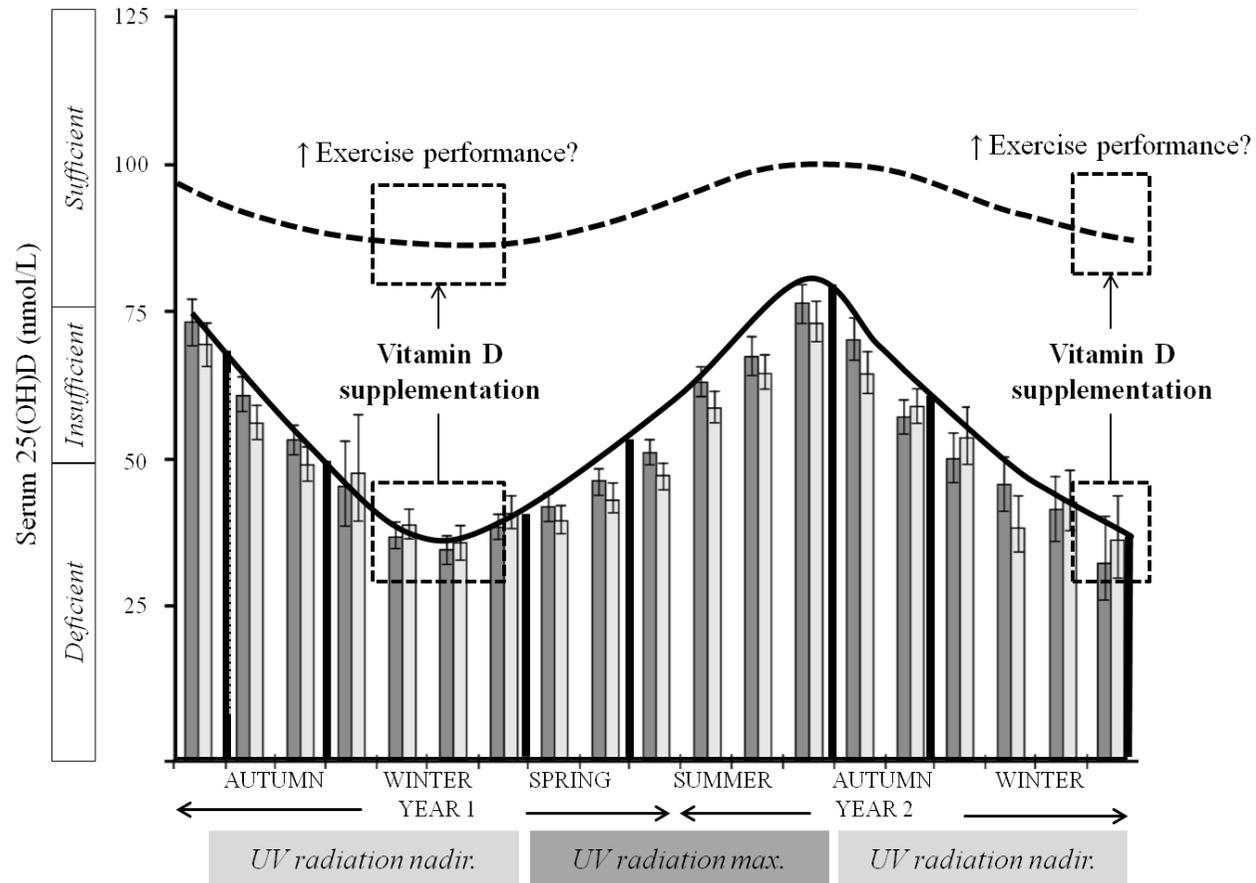


Figure adapted from *Hypponen and Power (2007) Am J Clin Nutr 85 (3) 860-8*. Reproduced with permission from AJCN.

It is often assumed that a reduction in PTH will lead to improved bone health. Yet in the majority of the aforementioned studies markers of bone health or fracture risk were not assessed. Despite this, a large number of population based studies have demonstrated that the risk of fractures and bone loss over time is greatly increased at 25(OH)D <50 nmol/L. Cauley et al [275] showed that the relative risk of hip fractures was greater in women with 25(OH)D < 47.5 nmol/L when compared to those with 25(OH)D >70 nmol/L. Similar findings have also been shown in men as well as young and old individuals [276-280] where the risk of fracture is lower at concentrations >50 nmol/L. Collectively it is well established that vitamin D is vital for bone health and increasing vitamin D status with supplementation can reduce the risk of fractures [265, 281]. Achieving a vitamin D status of 50-75 nmol/L would appear optimal for bone health.

#### **1.9.4 Vitamin D and muscle function**

The contention regarding vitamin D status guidelines is also based on well documented evidence that shows that vitamin D is highly important in optimal muscle function and composition. This point is particularly made by the Endocrine Society who argue that the IOM report does not consider the effects that vitamin D has on extra skeletal health.

Muscle weakness, otherwise known as myopathy, features in those individuals with vitamin D deficiency (< 25 nmol/L) [282-284] but may also occur at high vitamin D concentrations 25-50 nmol/L [285]. Myopathy is also accompanied with muscle pain and hypotonia in children and adults [286, 287] resulting in an impaired ability to perform simple physical tasks such as: climbing stairs as well as standing and sitting from a chair. In addition, neuromuscular impairments also occur with vitamin D deficiency [288, 289], as observed by a waddling gait, increased body sway and abnormalities to motor recruitment [9, 290]. The impairment to muscle function and neuromuscular activity may in part be explained by the depleted calcium content and uptake observed in isolated mitochondria and skeletal muscle from animals, respectively [291, 292]. More recently, Sinha et al [293] demonstrated that the skeletal muscle fatigue associated with vitamin D deficiency may be

explained by an attenuated mitochondrial oxidative function as measured by magnetic resonance spectroscopy. Thus it appears that vitamin D is crucial in the maintenance of skeletal muscle structure and functionality.

Evidence exists to show that the predominant impairments to muscle function with vitamin D deficiency are improved with vitamin D supplementation [286, 287, 290]. Furthermore, these improvements are reported to occur at concentrations  $> 75$  nmol/L [267], with Zittermann et al [294] defining optimal concentrations for skeletal muscle function at 25(OH)D 100-250 nmol/L. Morphological changes have also been shown to be a predominant feature of vitamin D deficiency [9, 295]. Biopsy studies have shown atrophy of type II muscle fibres associated with myopathy induced by vitamin D deficiency [296, 297]. Sato et al [296] demonstrated that the age related decline in type II muscle fibres was reversed in those supplemented with vitamin D (1000 IU/d) for 2 years, which correlated with 25(OH)D. Further, Visser et al [298] documented in 331 elderly men and women ( $>65$  y) that the age related decline in muscle mass (sarcopenia) was doubled in those who were vitamin D deficient ( $<50$  nmol/L) and had greater PTH ( $>3.0$  pmol/L) concentrations. More recently, cross sectional evidence in young women showed a 24% greater degree of fat infiltration in the muscle in those with lower 25(OH)D ( $<50$  nmol/L) [299].

#### **1.9.4.1 Evidence from the elderly**

These deleterious effects of vitamin D deficiency on skeletal muscle structure and function have also been shown in numerous studies in the elderly to increase the risk of falls and reduce skeletal muscle strength and endurance.

The association between vitamin D and risk of falls may in part be explained by an improved muscle function. A number of large cross sectional studies have examined this potential relationship by using a number of tests including hand grip dynamometer strength, leg strength, sit to stand test, walking speed tests and the timed up and go test. Visser et al [298] monitored 1008 elderly men and women ( $> 65$  y) over a 3 year period and showed that during this time a vitamin D status  $< 25$  nmol/L reduced

hand grip strength twice as much when compared to those with higher vitamin D status. In a similar study design, Wicherts et al [300] showed that in 1234 elderly men and women (>65 y) physical performance (assessed using a variety of tests) was collectively poorer in individuals with vitamin D status < 50 nmol/L as opposed to those with > 75 nmol/L. Furthermore, the authors observed a greater reduction in physical performance in individual who were severely vitamin D deficient (< 25 nmol/L).. In support of these findings Bischoff-Ferrari et al [301] showed that in 4100 elderly individuals had better physical performance test outcomes when concentrations of 25(OH)D were between 22-40 nmol/L, with further improvements observed from 40-94 nmol/L. The study also showed that the benefits of vitamin D on physical performance were observed in both physical active and inactive individuals. Additionally, Bischoff-Ferrari et al [302] previously showed that a higher vitamin D status is also positively associated with improved leg extension power, which is more specific to performance measures that may be used in health adults or athletes. This suggests that the benefits to muscle function may even be observed in individuals with healthy and functional skeletal muscle and in tests that are more specific to athletic performance.

However, not all studies in the elderly have found an association between vitamin D status and muscle function [303-307]. This inconsistency is further evident when looking at the evidence to support the efficacy of vitamin D supplementation to improve muscle function in the elderly. The lack of consistent findings when investigating the effect of vitamin D on muscle function and performance in the elderly is due to the highly variable study design implemented. This includes the variable dose (400-2000IU/d or 8400-14,000IU/wk or 100,000IU/month), composition (Calcium, D<sub>2</sub> or D<sub>3</sub>), duration (3 months – 7 years), basal vitamin D status (15-115 nmol/L) and participant characteristics (age, gender and disability). While the evidence is mixed, there are a number of studies that show a significant improvement in muscle function following vitamin D supplementation [296, 308-315]. Lips et al [316] demonstrated that 8400 IU/wk (~1200IU/d) reduced body sway in 226 elderly men and women (>70 y). Gupta et al [317] showed a significant improvement in grip and calf strength in Asian adult men and women (32 y) when supplemented with 60,000IU/ wk of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> and

1000mg calcium. However, this effect may only have been observed as the participants were severely deficient prior to supplementation (<25 nmol/L). In agreement other studies have shown no benefit to muscle function when baseline vitamin D status has been insufficient or sufficient (50- >75 nmol/L) [318-320]. Further, a recent meta analysis of 17 randomised controlled trials involving 5072 elderly participants, concluded that there was no significant effect of vitamin D supplementation (range of doses included 400IU/d to 60,000IU/wk) on leg or grip strength in the elderly when baseline 25(OH)D were >25nmol/L [321]. In addition Kenny et al [313] showed no improvement to exercise performance or strength in elderly individuals who were sufficient at baseline, despite a significant increase in 25(OH)D (~87nmol/L) following 1000IU/d for 6 months.

#### **1.9.4.2 Evidence from young adults and adolescents**

The effect of vitamin D on muscle function and exercise performance has been examined in adolescents and younger adults [307, 322, 323]. Ward et al [322] tested 99 postmenarchal girls aged 12-14 y and showed that vitamin D status was positively correlated with two leg counter movement jump height, velocity, power and force. Similar findings were observed in Chinese adolescent girls (15 y old) where a positive correlation was found between vitamin D status and hand grip strength [323]. Significantly lower hand grip strength was apparent in those girls who were not vitamin D deficient and severely deficient when compared to those with vitamin D status > 50 nmol/L. More recently, evidence in 200 male and female adults showed that vitamin D sufficiency may be important for endurance performance, as VO<sub>2</sub> max was positively correlated with 25(OH)D [324]. Thus, vitamin D may play a role in muscle function and exercise performance (VO<sub>2</sub> max) in groups of individuals whose muscle morphology has not deteriorated, as observed in the aforementioned elderly studies. Although this observation in healthy adults, let alone in athletes, has not been well defined and requires further investigation. However, to date, the associative evidence between vitamin D and muscle function has not taken into account variables that may contribute towards to positive association. Firstly most of the evidence to date that has found a significant association has mainly been a heterogeneous group. In addition back ground nutrition, such as habitual dietary intake and

dietary supplements, which may contribute to muscle mass growth and development are not taken into account. These are factors that must be considered in more detail in future investigations.

Another variable that may also contribute to explaining the improvements to muscle function, strength and size with higher 25(OH)D is the relationship between vitamin D and testosterone [325, 326]. Testosterone, a steroid hormone from the androgen group, is important in muscle anabolism during growth and development [327]. In addition, serum testosterone release is reduced with age, which has been suggested to be linked with the sarcopenia [328]. Consequently ensuring serum testosterone concentrations are optimal throughout the life span is vital for growth and development.

With this in mind, serum testosterone concentrations (both free and total) have been shown to vary season by season, with higher concentrations seen during the summer compared with the winter [329]. Other studies have failed to observe a seasonal pattern, but attributed the lack of pattern to less time spent outdoors during the summer [330, 331]. This data would suggest that seasonal fluctuations in vitamin D status could alter serum testosterone concentrations. In support, a number of studies have shown that 25(OH)D is associated with serum testosterone concentrations (Free and total) [332-334]. Nimptsch et al [334] illustrated, in 1362 men (aged 40-75 y), that a dose response between 25(OH)D and testosterone (Free and total) was observed, until a plateau was reached between 75-85 nmol/L. This data would suggest that optimal testosterone concentrations are reached when vitamin D sufficient (> 75 nmol/L). In further support, Pilz et al [335] has previously shown in overweight men (25-49 y) that 1 year vitamin D supplementation (3332 IU/d) raised 25(OH)D to sufficiency and significantly increased both free and total testosterone concentration when compared to placebo.

Currently though, it is unknown whether increasing testosterone concentrations in young adults, especially athletes is beneficial to health, athletic performance or training adaptation. It is without doubt that optimal testosterone concentrations are vital for developing children and preserving quality of muscle mass in the elderly. In support, Bischoff-Ferrari et al [336] illustrated that those elderly men and women (> 65 y) with higher serum testosterone had a predicted 60% lower risk of falls, which was

further reduced with 3 years vitamin D (700 IU/d) plus calcium (500 mg/d) supplementation. In contrast, recent data from West et al [337] in young health males, showed that increasing circulatory testosterone during and after acute exercise and throughout a 12 week training programme, did not increase acute muscle protein synthesis [338] or training induced skeletal muscle adaptations [339]. Consequently, the effect of vitamin D and testosterone altering skeletal muscle mass and function, and the benefits it may bring to athletes, remains largely unknown.

On the whole, evidence suggests that vitamin D deficiency may have deleterious effects on the skeletal muscle structure, size and function. Such losses within the skeletal muscle should not to be understated as they are critical in functionality and mobility in the elderly, but in the context of this thesis, may be critical in optimal exercise performance in athletes. However, to date this hypothesis in athletes is unclear. Consequently chapter 4 and 5 of this thesis examined the effect of vitamin D deficiency on muscle function and exercise performance in athletes.

This thesis defines vitamin D status as severe deficiency, deficiency, insufficiency and sufficiency corresponding to 25(OH)D concentrations of <25 nmol/L, <50 nmol/L, 50-75 nmol/L and >75 nmol/L, respectively. These cut offs for vitamin D status are in unison with the majority of guidelines to date [267, 340].

### **1.9.5 Vitamin D and Immune function**

Performance in various athletic events is multi factorial. Besides from the physiological limitations (skeletal muscle mass, contractile function, oxygen kinetics, substrate metabolism), well being and immune function are also important in determining performance. Of late, vitamin D has been shown to have a role in mediating immune function [341]. It is known that exercise, especially of high intensity, has an immunodepressive effect which appears to increase the risk of infection, especially upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) [342]. There are several factors to explain the immunodepressive effects of high intensity exercise which are beyond the scope of this thesis chapter. For an extensive insight into the topic the reader is directed to the recent review by Walsh et al [342]. One factor, in

which vitamin D may play a critical role, is through receptors found on the cell surface membrane of leucocytes known as toll like receptors (TLR) [343]. In brief, TLR are trans-membrane proteins that are critical in detecting microbial pathogens which in turn causes an inflammatory response to initiate proliferation of lymphocytes. However, it has been shown that exercise can acutely reduce the expression of TLR on monocyte cell surface membrane [344] and thus partly explain the immunodepressive effect. Vitamin D has been shown to firstly interact with TLR, as leucocytes possess a VDR and 1- $\alpha$  hydroxylase [341]. In turn this causes the hydroxylation of 25(OH)D to 1,25(OH)<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub>, which initiates antibiotic activity through antimicrobial peptide cathelicidin [345]. Therefore, it has been postulated that vitamin D is capable of activating an immune response independent of inflammation or TLR. While the majority of this evidence has stemmed from *in vitro* work, associative evidence has shown a lower risk of infection during the summer months when compared to the autumn and winter in the United Kingdom [346]. More recently Aloia et al [347] illustrated that 3 years of vitamin D supplementation (2 years - 800 IU/d, 1 year – 1000IU/d) reduced incidence of colds and related symptoms during the winter in 34 African-American post-menopausal women. However, since no study has confirmed these findings. Based on the limited data, it could be suggested that vitamin D may be important in optimising immune function, at least in athletes, when immunosuppression maybe prevalent when undergoing training.

### **1.9.6 Prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in the United Kingdom**

In the United Kingdom (UK) (50-60°N), a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency has been observed. Data from the 1958 British birth cohort study showed that 2850 adults 25(OH)D during the winter and spring season averaged 41.1 nmol/L, of which 47% of adults were deficient (<40 nmol/L), and 16% were clinically deficient (<25 nmol/L) (Figure 1.1) [262]. More recently, Cashman et al [348] showed that during the winter in 1132 men and women living in Ireland (52°N), 59% were vitamin D deficient (<50 nmol/L) and 84% were vitamin D insufficient (<75 nmol/L). Further, the authors showed that even during the summer, 22-36% and 69% of participants tested were vitamin D deficient and insufficient respectively. The high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency

is explained by the fact that the UK has one of the poorest sunny climates worldwide [349] with a high yearly cloud cover [350]. This means that over the course of the year sunlight exposure is severely impaired, reducing the synthesis of vitamin D. In addition, during the winter in the UK, little or no cutaneous vitamin D synthesis occurs due to a high zenith angle and low UVB (Figure 1.1) [255, 258]. Further, it appears that the current UK policy on sun exposure is primarily focused on preventing the development of skin cancer, with previous recommendations stating avoidance of sun exposure (Cancer Research UK and World Health Organisation) [268, 351]. Yet these policies and recommendations neglect the consideration of the health benefits of vitamin D to both bone and muscle [268]. It has since been suggested that 10-15 minutes of sun exposure to just the hands and face in the summer is sufficient to gain adequate vitamin D status [268]. This was further supported by SACN in 2007 who stated that individuals are able to gain enough vitamin D from time spent outdoors with sun bathing not being required, especially to avoid sun burn and higher risk of skin cancer [44]. In contention with the abovementioned statements, evidence has shown that sunlamp treatment (3/wk for 6 wk) to individuals during the winter mimicking the midday summer sun of UK (53.8°N), resulted in only 26% of individuals obtaining sufficient vitamin D status [81]. This data clearly supports the notion that casual sun exposure in the UK is not adequate in the winter, let alone in the summer, to raise and sustain sufficient vitamin D status.

The high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency in the UK may also, to a lesser extent to sun exposure, be explained by the poor dietary intake of vitamin D. Today, very few foods are fortified with vitamin D in the UK and dietary intake from sources such as fish and meats is limited, with current food sources estimated to provide ~120IU/d [268]. Consequently, the high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency in the summer and winter in the UK demonstrates the lack of vitamin D intake from both dietary and sun exposure.

With this in mind, vitamin D supplementation is therefore warranted. However, to date the vitamin D dose required to raise and sustain vitamin D status at sufficient concentrations is currently under debate. The recent IOM report [265] states that in order to achieve a vitamin D status of >50 nmol/L a

vitamin D intake of 600 IU/d is required. Further, the SACN and FSA state a daily recommended value (DRV) of 400 IU/d [266], only if sun exposure is limited. However numerous studies have shown that independent of sun exposure in the UK, an intake of 400-600 IU/d is inadequate to raise vitamin D status to  $>50$  nmol/L [352]. In further support, Hall et al [353] demonstrated that in order to sustain sufficient vitamin D status across the year, summer sun exposure had to be high (90 min/d) and as a result vitamin D supplementation of 1300IU/d was required during the winter. Alternatively, the authors also showed that during low sun exposure in the summer (~20 min/d) it was estimated that 1000IU/d was required during the summer, while during the winter 2550IU/d was required. Yet, the work by Hall et al [353] was conducted in California, which would suggest that far higher doses of vitamin D would be needed in the UK to sustain sufficient vitamin D status all year round due to the poor sun exposure in the UK.

In light of the poor contribution of the sun and the diet to vitamin D status in the UK, it has been proposed that doses above the current RDA in the UK (200 IU/d), between 1000-4000 IU/d, may be required to achieve and sustain vitamin D sufficiency [267, 340]. However, with the higher suggested doses of vitamin D, has brought into question the safety and toxicity of such doses [265, 266, 354-356]. Vitamin D toxicity, categorised by hypercalcaemia, has been reported to only take effect at 25(OH)D concentrations  $>350$  nmol/L which are achieved with vitamin D<sub>3</sub>  $> 100,000$  IU/d [354-356]. However, doses up to 10,000 IU/d have been shown to be efficacious at improving vitamin D status in the absence of toxicity, which questions the current upper limits of vitamin D set [355]. Taken together, vitamin D supplementation would appear to be an effective strategy to ensure vitamin D sufficiency, however to date a vitamin D supplement protocol (dose and duration) is yet to be determined. Herein, to begin establishing an effective supplementation protocol, chapter 6 of this thesis explores the dose response of short term (28 d) vitamin D<sub>3</sub> supplementation, well above the current UK DRV, on achieving vitamin D sufficiency during the winter.

### **1.9.7 Prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in athletes**

Based on the aforementioned evidence, vitamin D deficiency is wide spread in the general population [11]. It can be assumed from large cross sectional data in adults [348, 352, 357], that those vitamin D deficient individuals would likely include physically active and competitive sports men or women. Currently there is a growing appreciation for the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in athletic populations. However, the prevalence at higher latitudes such as the UK remains unclear (Table 1.4).

Athletes who train and compete indoors, cover their skin, or compete at high latitudes may be more at risk of vitamin D deficiency [10, 252, 260]. In agreement, Hamilton et al [250] showed that athletes who lived and trained in Qatar, who regularly train indoors, cover their skin (for environmental and social factors), or train after sunset observed a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (~90%) despite the sunny environment. Similar results were observed in athletes residing in Israel, with 94% of basketball players and dancers being vitamin D insufficient [251]. Interestingly, even outdoor athletes have been shown to suffer from vitamin D deficiency, as demonstrated by French cyclists who train outdoors 16 h/wk [358].

Even at low latitudes, where the climate is less extreme than the abovementioned studies, 33% and 50% of Australian elite gymnasts were vitamin D deficient and insufficient at the end of autumn [359]. At higher latitudes, especially during the winter, a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency has been reported in athletes [249, 360-364]. Lehtonen-Veromaa et al [362] showed that 68% and 43% of young Finnish girls (60.5°N) competing in gymnastics and running in the winter were vitamin D deficient (<38 nmol/L in the study) and clinically vitamin D deficient (<30 nmol/L) respectively.

However, during the summer, the authors demonstrated an improved vitamin D status, with only 2% of the athletes being vitamin D deficient. Vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency has also been reported amongst elite athletes [361, 363, 364]. Morton et al [363] reported a mean 25(OH)D of  $51 \pm 19$  nmol/L during the winter in the UK elite football players, with 65% of the players being insufficient. Similarly, at the beginning of the football season which corresponded with the end of the summer in

the UK, only 10% of the players were vitamin D insufficient. This was likely due to the majority of the players spending the summer abroad in hot and sunny climates. Further, a recent study in UK elite track and field athletes observed that over the course of the year, 19% and 29% of athletes were vitamin D deficient and insufficient, respectively [364]. However, the authors did not control for the season that the blood sample was collected, therefore little is known about the prevalence of vitamin D status throughout each season in this group of athletes.

**Table 1.4 Overview of studies assessing vitamin D status in athletes across the seasons**

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Country (<sup>o</sup>N)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Season</i>	<i>25(OH)D (nmol/L)</i>	<i>Prevalence of vitamin D status</i>
Hamilton et al [250]	Doha, Qatar (25.3°N)	93 ( <i>I:20 O:73</i> )	13-45 y	Summer	58% < 25 3% < 50	Deficient (<50 nmol/L): 91% Sufficient (50-75 nmol/L):9%
Constantini et al [251]	Jerusalem, Israel (31.8°N)	98 ( <i>I:77 O:21</i> )	10-30 y	Winter Summer	W-63 ± 21 S-67 ± 43	Deficient (<50 nmol/L): 19% Insufficient (50-75 nmol/L): 48% Sufficient (>75 nmol/L): 27%
Lovell et al [337]	Canberra, Australia (35.3°S)	18 ( <i>I:18 O:0</i> )	10-17 y	Autumn	56 (range 29-84)	Deficient (<50 nmol/L): 34% Insufficient (50-75 nmol/L): 50% Sufficient (>75 nmol/L): 16%
Lehtonen et al [340]	Turku, Finland (60.5°N)	131( <i>I:20 O:73</i> )	9-15 y	Winter Summer	W-34 ± 14 S-63 ± 15	W- Deficient (<37.5 nmol/L): 68% S- Deficient (<37.5 nmol/L): 2%
Barrack et al [343]	California, USA (38.5°N)	26 ( <i>I:0 O:26</i> )	14-17 y	Autumn	93 ± 3	NR
Galan et al [344]	Seville, Spain (37.4°N)	28 ( <i>I:0, O:28</i> )	27 ± 4 y	Winter Summer	W- 38-111 S- 62-163	W- Insufficient (<75 nmol/L): 64% S- Sufficient (>75 nmol/L): 93%
Halliday et al [249]	Wyoming, USA (41.3°N)	41 ( <i>I:12, O:29</i> )	20 ± 2 y	Winter Spring Autumn	W-76 ± 24 Sp-105 ± 37 A- 123 ± 42	W-Insufficient (<80 nmol/L): 61% Deficient (<50 nmol/L): 3% Sp- Insufficient (<80 nmol/L): 16% Deficient (<50 nmol/L): 4% A- Insufficient (<80 nmol/L): 10% Deficient (<50 nmol/L): 2%
Ducher et al [345]	Melbourne, Australia (37.8°S)	16 ( <i>I:16, O: 0</i> )	10-19 y	Winter	50 (range 21-94)	Deficient (<50 nmol/L):56% Insufficient (50-75 nmol/L): 25% Sufficient (>75 nmol/L): 19%
Bescos et al [338]	Barcelona, Spain (41.4°N)	21 ( <i>I:21, O: 0</i> )	25 ± 4 y	Winter	48 ± 22	Deficient (<50 nmol/L):57% Insufficient 50-75 nmol/L): 33% Sufficient (>75 nmol/L): 10%

**Abbreviations:** **I** Indoor, **O** Outdoor, **W** Winter, **Sp** Spring, **A** Autumn, **S** Summer **NR** Not reported

**Table 1.4 continued**

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Country (°N)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Season</i>	<i>25(OH)D (nmol/L)</i>	<i>Prevalence of vitamin D status</i>
Morton et al [341]	Liverpool, United Kingdom (53.4°N)	20 ( <i>O</i> : 20)	26 ± 4 y	Winter Summer	W-104 ± 21 S-51 ± 19	W- Insufficient (<50 nmol/L): 65% Sufficient (>50 nmol/L): 35% S – Insufficient (<50 nmol/L): 10% Sufficient (>50 nmol/L): 90%
Pollock et al [342]	United Kingdom (51-54 °N)	63 ( <i>I</i> : 20, <i>O</i> : 43)	25 ± 4 y	Winter Summer	W-63 ± 30 S-89 ± 40	Deficient (<50 nmol/L): 19% Insufficient (50-75 nmol/L): 29%
Close et al [339]	Liverpool, United Kingdom (53.4°N)	61( <i>O</i> : 61)	22 ± 2 y	Winter	Range 15-125	Deficient (<50 nmol/L) – 62% Insufficient (50-75 nmol/L)– 38%
Close et al [346]	Liverpool, United Kingdom (53.4°N)	30 ( <i>O</i> : 30)	21 ± 2 y	Winter/Spring	51 ± 26	Severely deficient (<30 nmol/L) – 20% Deficient (<50 nmol/L) – 57%
Wilson et al [347]	Liverpool, United Kingdom (53.4°N)	36 ( <i>F</i> :19, <i>J</i> : 18)	F 27 ± 5 y J 25 ± 5 y	Winter	F 38 ± 28 J 35 ± 14	Severely deficient (<30 nmol/L) – 37% Deficient (<50 nmol/L) – 31%

**Abbreviations:** **I** Indoor, **O** Outdoor, **W** Winter, **Sp** Spring, **A** Autumn, **S** Summer **NR** Not reported **F** Flat horse riders **J** Jump horse riders

The most comprehensive study to date investigated vitamin D status, dietary intake of vitamin D and sun exposure habits in 41 athletes, living at latitude of 41.3°N, from a number of indoor and outdoor sports across a season [249]. The authors observed a biphasic response in vitamin D status across the seasons, with a higher prevalence of vitamin D insufficiency in the winter compared to the spring and autumn, 61%, 16% and 12% respectively. It appeared that vitamin D status was higher in outdoor athletes at the end of autumn. Additionally, very few athletes reported consuming the RDA of vitamin D set in the US (<7% in all seasons) or consuming a vitamin D supplement (24-54% of athletes across the season). Yet, multivitamin intake was frequently used by athletes and correlated with vitamin D status in the winter. In agreement, a growing number of studies have illustrated that athletes consume vitamin D well below the DRI and is often an ignored micronutrient by athletes and nutritionists [252-254].

Therefore, vitamin D status in athletes is ultimately determined by a number of risk factors that regulate the cutaneous synthesis of vitamin D from the sun and dietary intake. Nevertheless, despite the work by Halliday et al [249], there is very limited information on the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in athletes, especially those living and training at high latitudes (>50°N), for example in the UK [361, 363, 364]. Secondly, very little is known about the extent that risk factors are associated with developing vitamin D deficiency in athletes. However, it would appear that the high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency in the winter and autumn months combined with the low dietary vitamin D intake, as previously discussed, warrants the use of vitamin D supplementation by athletes. In light of this discussion, chapters 5 and 6 in this thesis detail studies that explore the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in a variety of UK athletes, during the winter, while establishing the association that lifestyle, training and dietary factors have with vitamin D status.

### **1.9.8 Vitamin D and athletic performance**

Early evidence from German and Russian athletes suggested the potential benefits and importance of vitamin D for optimal exercise performance [10]. In 1930, reports from Germany stated that exercise

performance could be improved when ultraviolet irradiation from sun lamps was given to athletes, with some athletic associations arguing it provided an unfair athletic advantage [10]. The improvement to performance was observed through the manipulation of vitamin D status by using 8-10 weeks of ultraviolet irradiation. The performance improvements included strength, speed, endurance, cardiovascular fitness and reaction time. However, the reported magnitude of performance improvements was large (8-60%) when compared to placebo, which was paralleled with the fact that many of the studies were often poorly controlled. Coinciding with the early ergogenic effects of vitamin D, consistent literature indicates physical and athletic performance is seasonal; which may be related to the concentration of vitamin D found within the body [10] (Figure 1.1). In support, long distance runners performance and  $VO_2$  max has been shown to improve during the summer compared with winter seasons [370]. Interestingly, Hettinger et al 1956 [371], reported that daily training of the wrist flexor muscles for 7-10 months significantly improved strength gains during the summer and a decline in the winter months. Yet, it is difficult to conclude that the ergogenic effects are solely due to vitamin D due to the lack of control implemented throughout the abovementioned studies [10]. Nevertheless, sustaining sufficient vitamin D status throughout the year, specifically by preventing vitamin D deficiency in the winter and autumn, may be advantageous to an athlete's training and exercise performance (Figure 1.1). Within the past year, this paradigm has undergone preliminary investigation. Barker et al [372] observed that participants who received 200IU/d or 4000IU/d for 28 days did not improve muscle strength when compared to placebo during the winter. However, the lack of finding was likely due to the low latitude of the test site ( $40^\circ\text{N}$ ), which was accompanied by a high prevalence of vitamin D sufficiency prior to supplementation. More recently, a pilot study conducted in a small number of soccer players ( $n=10$ ) found that 8 weeks of 5000IU/d during the winter in the UK ( $53^\circ\text{N}$ ) significantly improved 10 m sprint times and vertical jump when compared to placebo [361]. The work conducted by Close et al [361] provides early insight into the potential benefits of achieving and sustaining vitamin D sufficiency for athletic performance. However, due to the small subject number recruited and the poor control implemented throughout the study (training regime, diet and supplement compliance) the benefits of vitamin D supplementation in athletes remain unclear. In

addition, the current supplementation protocol (dose and duration) that is necessary to achieve vitamin D sufficiency and consequently provide benefits to exercise performance is also yet to be determined. With this in mind, Close et al [368] recently examined the effect of 20,000 IU/wk and 40,000 IU/wk compared to a placebo control for 12 weeks on muscle function (1-RM bench press, leg press, 20-m sprint and vertical jump height) in rugby and football players. The authors found that 57% of the athletes were vitamin D deficient prior to supplementation which increased to sufficiency in both supplementation groups. Following 12 weeks of supplementation, no difference in vitamin D status was observed between the two doses. However, despite the sufficient concentrations following supplementation, no differences in any muscle function test was observed in the athletes. However, interestingly the authors did demonstrate that high weekly doses of vitamin D (20,000 IU/wk ~ 2800IU/d) are highly effective at increasing vitamin D status in 6 weeks. Therefore, this early data in athletes suggests that high doses of vitamin D, above the RDA, are efficacious at correcting the high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency. However, it is firstly yet to be determined whether or not high daily doses above the vitamin D DRI, which is a more realistic nutritional regime that may be used by many athletes, are effective at increasing vitamin D status. Secondly, it remains unclear if increasing vitamin D status with this supplementation strategy may improve exercise performance. Herein chapter 6 of the thesis focuses on elucidating the optimal dose response with vitamin D supplementation on improving status and whether achieving sufficiency improves exercise performance in UK athletes.

### **1.9.9 Mechanisms to describe the effects of vitamin D in skeletal muscle**

The improvement in skeletal muscle function and structure with vitamin D suggests that it is capable of directly binding and inducing effects within the skeletal muscle. This is firmly supported by the presence of the vitamin D receptor (VDR) within the skeletal muscle which is required to induce the physiological of vitamin D. [373, 374]. In addition, the enzyme 1-OHase has also recently been identified in skeletal muscle [375] allowing 25(OH)D to convert to 1,25(OH)<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub>. The interaction and

activation of the VDR in the skeletal muscle is understood to induce genomic (slow) and non-genomic (fast) signalling pathways through the presence of nuclear and non-nuclear VDR [376].

The genomic effects of vitamin D occur by the VDR interacting with a nuclear retinoic acid-x-receptor (RXR) to form a complex which then induces DNA transcription and *de novo* protein synthesis [9]. Vitamin D is capable of targeting more than 1000 vitamin D responsive human genes [377], specifically relating to skeletal muscle calcium handling, proliferation and differentiation [378-382]. Secondly, VDR knockout mice display abnormal skeletal muscle developmental growth, resulting in severely atrophied muscles, impaired functional performance and motor co-ordination [383, 384]. Additionally, these knockout mice have also been shown to have impaired swimming ability and motor co-ordination [383, 385]. Thirdly, vitamin D has also been shown to mediate the synthesis proteins that are vital for skeletal muscle physiology and contractile function including: ATP accumulation [386], increased troponin C [387], as well as actin and sarcoplasmic reticulum expression [388]. Collectively this mechanistic data from animal *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies proposes that vitamin D has pro-anabolic effects within the skeletal muscle. However, the direct examination of these effects within human skeletal muscle is yet to be conducted.

Alternatively,  $1,25(\text{OH})_2\text{D}_3$  is capable of inducing non-genomic (fast) responses within the skeletal muscle via the VDR by formation of secondary signalling messengers or phosphorylation of intracellular proteins. These signals are thought to occur through manipulations of caveolae microdomains on the plasma membrane of the skeletal muscle which are important in signal transduction [389]. Those characterised signalling pathways include p38 mitogen activated protein kinase (p38 MAPK) [389, 390] phosphoinositol-3-kinase (PI3-K)/Akt [391] and extracellular regulated kinase1/2 (ERK 1/2) [392]. All of these signalling proteins are known to be implicated in the upstream regulation of mammalian target of rapamycin (mTOR) complex 1 (mTORC1), which is well documented to be critical in the regulation of skeletal muscle mass [393, 394]. However, the direct interaction between vitamin D, mTORC1 and the regulation of skeletal muscle mass and function in humans is unknown. Interestingly, the benefits to skeletal muscle growth and strength following

amino acid treatment in the elderly were shown to be reduced in those participants who were vitamin D deficient and insufficient [395]. This in part may be explained by reduced non-genomic signalling and blunted mTORC1 activity. But it also may be explained by early evidence which showed greater muscle protein degradation [396] and reduced incorporation of the amino acid leucine, which is known to stimulate mTORC1 [397], in vitamin D deficient rat skeletal muscle [386]. This provides even more evidence for vitamin D possessing a pro anabolic effect within the skeletal muscle.

The effects of vitamin D on muscle function and strength have also been shown to be independent of changes to muscle mass [297, 398]. Early evidence in vitamin D depleted chicks showed the calcium content and uptake by the SR was low [291, 292]. Furthermore, *in vitro* studies have shown that treatment of vitamin D depleted animal myotubes with  $1,25(\text{OH})_2\text{D}_3$  results in a rapid uptake of calcium [381, 399]. This is due to  $1,25(\text{OH})_2\text{D}_3$  being able to induce the initiation of calcium mobilisation from the SR, as well as influx from extracellular compartments through voltage gated and store-operated calcium channels [400, 401]. Through the increase in calcium mobilisation, calmodulin and calmodulin-dependent protein kinase II (CAMK II) are also activated [380, 389, 391, 392, 402, 403]. These calmodulin signals are known to be important in skeletal muscle mitochondrial biogenesis [87, 104] which may provide evidence for the improvements to fatigue with correction of vitamin D deficiency [282, 293, 301].

Collectively, the genomic and non-genomic mechanisms of vitamin D illustrate that the importance of vitamin D in skeletal muscle structure and function. It would appear that through the mechanisms, vitamin D is highly important in preventing the development of peripheral fatigue, which is highly important in ageing functionality but also in athletic performance. Additionally, vitamin D may also be critical in optimising the adaptations to exercise training, which is essential in preventing the development of sarcopenia in the elderly but may also be important for athletes. Yet these speculative viewpoints remain to be elucidated critically in human skeletal muscle, both *in vitro* and *in vivo*, in the elderly let alone in athletes.

## 1.10 Aims of the thesis

This thesis investigates a number of diverse nutritional interventions and supports that may optimise fat metabolism during exercise and improve endurance exercise performance. These interventions and supports include green tea, coffee and vitamin D.

**Chapter 2** describes a study where the metabolic effects of short term green tea supplementation were investigated both at rest and during exercise using a metabolomic approach. In addition Chapter 2 investigates the catecholamine response at rest and during exercise in order to test the hypothesis that green tea is capable of inducing alterations to substrate metabolism through the often cited COMT mechanism, which to date has not been comprehensively investigated in humans. **Chapter 3** describes a study where the metabolic and performance effects of caffeine were compared with coffee, in order to establish whether coffee may be used as a nutritional support by athletes to gain the same benefits to performance as previously observed with caffeine.

Based on the recent evidence that has demonstrated a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in the general population, there is concern for the extent of deficiency in athletes. **Chapter 4** describes a study whereby a variety of athletes living and training at high latitude were tested to assess the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency while also identifying the potential sources and limitations to vitamin D status. Chapter 4 also identifies whether vitamin D status is associated with exercise performance in athletes. The current vitamin D requirements to prevent deficiency are mixed and under current debate. **Chapter 5** describes a study that explored the effect that a variety of doses of vitamin D had on improving vitamin D status as well as the implications that improving vitamin D status would have on exercise performance.

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## Chapter 2

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# The Metabolic Response to Green Tea Extract during Rest and Moderate Intensity Exercise.

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### Published article

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J Nutr Biochem. 2013 Jan;24(1):325-34.

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## 2.1 Abstract

**Background:** Green tea catechins have been hypothesized to increase energy expenditure and fat oxidation by inhibiting catechol-O-methyltransferase (COMT) and thus promoting more sustained adrenergic stimulation. Metabolomics may help to clarify the mechanisms underlying their putative physiological effects. The study investigated the effects of seven days ingestion of green tea extract (GTE) on the plasma metabolite profile at rest and during exercise. **Methods:** In a placebo-controlled, double-blind, randomized, parallel study, 27 healthy physically active males consumed either GTE (n= 13, 1200mg catechins, 240 mg caffeine / day) or placebo (n= 14, PLA) drinks for seven days. After consuming a final drink (day 8) participants rested for two hours and then completed 60 minutes moderate intensity cycling exercise ( $56\pm 4\%$   $\text{VO}_2\text{max}$ ). Blood samples were collected before and during exercise. Plasma was analyzed using untargeted 4-phase metabolite profiling and targeted profiling of catecholamines. **Results:** Using the metabolomic approach we observed that GTE did not enhance adrenergic stimulation (adrenaline and noradrenaline) during rest or exercise. At rest, GTE lead to changes in metabolite concentrations related to fat metabolism ( $\beta$ -hydroxybutyrate), lipolysis (glycerol) and TCA cycle intermediates (citrate) when compared to PLA. GTE during exercise caused reductions in  $\beta$ -hydroxybutyrate concentrations as well as increases in pyruvate, lactate and alanine concentrations when compared to PLA. **Conclusions:** GTE supplementation resulted in marked metabolic differences during rest and exercise. These metabolic differences were not related to the adrenergic system, which questions the *in vivo* relevance of the COMT inhibition mechanism of action for GTE.

## 2.2 Introduction

The concept of “challenging homeostasis” has been proposed as a novel approach to define biomarkers for nutritional related health [1]. It is thought that responses to a challenge of homeostasis will affect multiple pathways and provide information other than static homeostatic and disease relevant end-point measures. These dynamic responses may be appropriate means to assess effects and mechanisms of nutritional interventions that may remain hidden under the large variation within a healthy population. Exercise is a physiological challenge to homeostasis of the human body. Metabolomics based on gas- or liquid chromatography – mass spectrometry (GC/MS, LC/MS) is capable of measuring the multi-factorial, integrative metabolic responses to an exercise challenge and/or a nutritional intervention or supplement [2-6].

Green tea has been reported to have a number of health promoting effects, including anti-obesity properties [7-10]. These health benefits are generally attributed to its polyphenol content, particularly to catechins that are often enriched in GTE (green tea extract). These are comprised of epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), epicatechin gallate, and gallic catechin gallate, among others. EGCG is thought to be the most pharmacologically active of the catechins. GTE also contains caffeine. The anti-obesity properties of GTE are attributed to both acute [11] and chronic [7,12] GTE supplementation augmenting energy expenditure (EE) and fat oxidation under resting conditions. However, this has not been consistently reported [13,14]. During moderate intensity exercise, EE is elevated several times when compared to rest, and absolute rates of lipolysis and fat oxidation are 3-10 fold higher. The administration of GTE could at least in theory have an additive effect on fat metabolism above and beyond what is seen with exercise alone. Indeed, it has been observed that fat metabolism is up regulated during exercise following both acute [15] and chronic [16] GTE supplementation. So far, differences in the metabolic effects of GTE between rest and exercise have not been investigated in a single study. It is also currently unknown, whether the effects of GTE on fat metabolism or any other related metabolic effects are more prominent following acute or chronic GTE supplementation.

It has previously been observed that certain catechins in GTE target specific control points of the sympathetic nervous system [17]. EGCG has been suggested to directly inhibit catechol-*O*-methyltransferase (COMT) an enzyme that is responsible for degrading catecholamines (noradrenaline (NA) and adrenaline (A)) [18]. Inhibiting the degrading action of COMT would lead to elevated catecholamine concentrations resulting in greater sympathetic nerve stimulation and thus higher rates of lipolysis. This is thought to elevate fat oxidation and EE at rest and during exercise [10]. The COMT pathway is likely to take effect following acute GTE supplementation. Alternatively, it has been suggested that chronic GTE supplementation may lead to an up- or down-regulation of various proteins and enzymes involved in fat metabolism [19,20]. However, there is no convincing evidence to support the acute or chronic mechanisms of GTE *in vivo*.

Based on the mixed study outcomes on fat metabolism following GTE supplementation, and the lack of mechanistic evidence *in vivo*, the aim of the present study was to examine the effects of 7 days GTE supplementation (1200 mg total catechins and 240 mg caffeine/day) on human metabolism at rest and during moderate intensity exercise ( $56 \pm 4\%$   $\text{VO}_2(\text{max})$ ). These effects were assessed in human plasma using GC-MS- and LC-MS/MS-based 4-phases metabolite profiling [21]. This comprehensive metabolite profiling approach provided an unbiased and systemic investigation into the multi-factorial metabolic response following GTE supplementation at rest and during exercise. We hypothesized that GTE ingestion for 7 days would induce metabolic changes consistent with increased lipolysis and that these changes could be maintained or enhanced during exercise after a single bolus intake of GTE. In addition, we tested the hypothesis that GTE stimulates the adrenergic system by measuring targeted profiles including various catecholamines.

## 2.3 Methods and Materials

### 2.3.1 Study design

#### 2.3.1.1 Participants

27 healthy physically active male participants were recruited for the purposes of the study. Inclusion criteria were: < 4 cups of tea or coffee / day (thus less than ~ 400 mg caffeine / day), exercise 3-5 times / week, 30-90 min / session. In addition, participants had to be 18-55 y and BMI < 30 kg.m<sup>-2</sup> to be included in the study. Participants were randomly allocated into either a GTE group (n=13, age 22 ± 5 y, weight 77.6 ± 12.0 kg, BMI 24.3 ± 3.0 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) or a placebo (PLA) group (n=14, age 22 ± 8 y, weight 78.8 ± 10.2 kg, BMI 24.7 ± 2.7 kg/m<sup>2</sup>). All participants gave written informed consent to participate in the study. The study was approved by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee.

#### 2.3.1.2 Preliminary Testing

One week prior to the first experimental trial, all participants visited the human performance lab for familiarisation, assessment of health and an incremental exercise test using an electronically braked cycle ergometer (Lode Excalibur Sport, Groningen, Netherlands) to volitional exhaustion [22]. Participants started by cycling at 95 W for 3 minutes and work rate was increased by 35 W ( $W_{inc}$ ) every 3 minutes ( $t_{inc}$ ) until they reached exhaustion. The  $W_{max}$  was calculated by using the following equation [23]:

$$W_{max} = W_{out} + (t/t_{inc}) W_{inc}$$

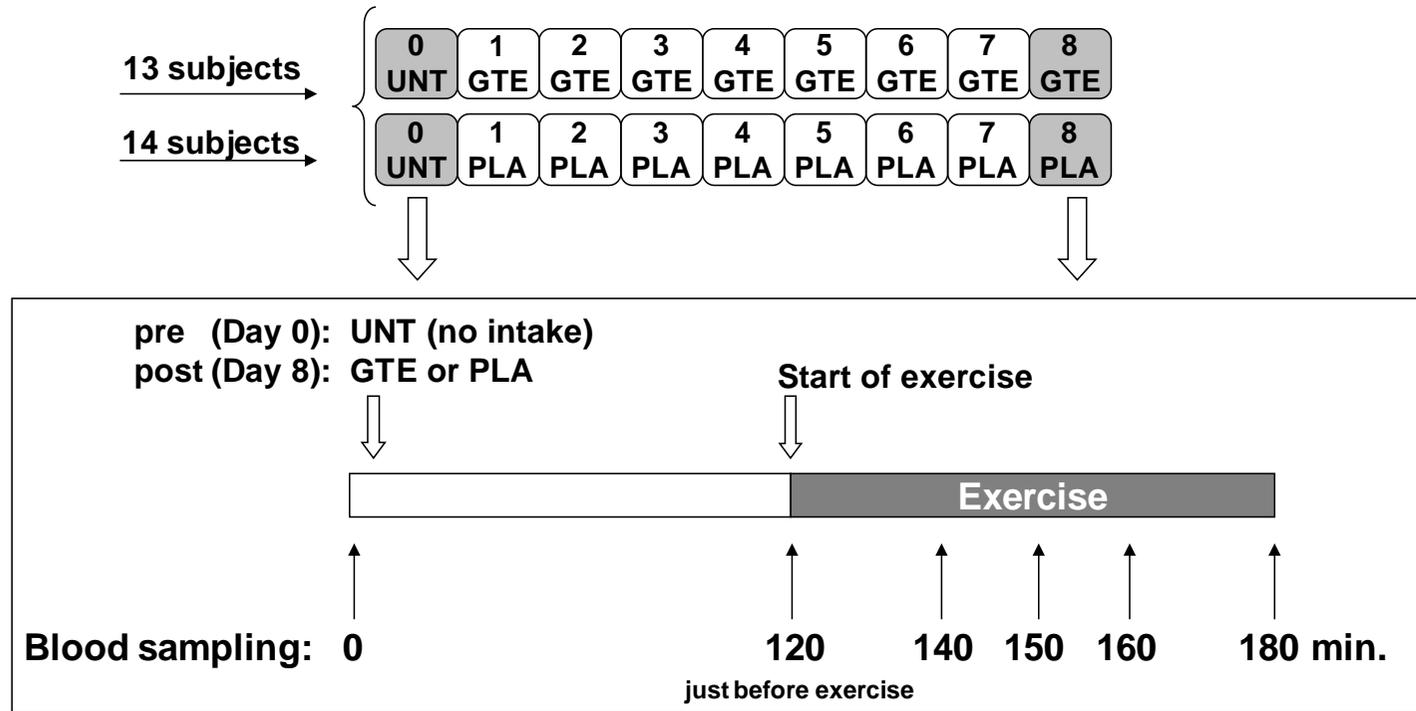
$W_{out}$  is the power output of the last completed stage (in W), and  $t$  is the time (in minutes) spent in the final stage.  $W_{max}$  values were used to determine the workload of 50%  $W_{max}$  (~55%  $VO_2(max)$ ) used in the experimental trials. Respiratory measures of oxygen consumption ( $\dot{V}O_2$ ) and carbon dioxide production ( $\dot{V}CO_2$ ) were assessed using an online gas analysis system (Oxycon Pro, Jaeger). Heart rate (HR) was measured continuously (Polar S625X; Polar Electro Oy, Kempele, Finland).  $\dot{V}O_2$  was

considered to be maximal if 2 of the 3 following conditions were met: 1) a levelling off of ( $\dot{V}O_2$ ) with further increasing workloads; 2) a HR within 10 beats/minutes of the age predicted maximum (220 bpm - age); and 3) a respiratory exchange ratio of  $>1$ .

### 2.3.1.3 Experimental Design

The study was designed as a placebo-controlled, double-blind, randomized, parallel study. Subjects in the assigned groups consumed either a GTE drink (1200 mg catechins, 240 mg caffeine) or a PLA drink for seven days (Figure 2.1). On day 0 (D0), all participants arrived at the Human Performance Lab between 0600 and 0800 following a 10 hour overnight fast and 24 hour controlled diet on D0. Upon arrival a flexible 20-gauge Teflon catheter (Venflon; Becton Dickinson, Plymouth, United Kingdom) was then inserted into an antecubital vein. A 3-way stopcock (PVB Medizintechnik, Kirchsean, Germany) was attached to the catheter to allow repeated blood sampling during the trial. A resting blood sample (5 mL) was taken (t=0 min). Participants then rested for 2 hours in a seated position. At the end of the rest period a second resting blood sample (5 mL) was taken (t=120 min). Following this, participants began cycling at 50%  $W_{max}$  for 60 minutes. Throughout the exercise blood samples (5 mL) were taken at t=140, 150, 160, 180 minutes (Figure 2.1). The catheter was kept patent by flushing it with 3-4 mL isotonic saline (0.9%; Baxter, Norfolk, United Kingdom) after each blood sample. The experimental trial was then repeated 8 days later. The only difference in the trials on D0 and D8 was the consumption of a single bolus of GTE (600 mg catechins, 120 mg caffeine) or PLA after the collection of the resting blood sample and prior to the resting period.

Figure. 2.1. Study design schematic



### 2.3.1.4 Diet and Supplement

After the initial trial, participants were randomly assigned to either ingest GTE or PLA for 7 days (Figure 2.1). The GTE and PLA supplements were provided in the form of a drink. Each drink was provided in a 330 mL can. The GTE (Taiyo International, Japan) and PLA compositions are displayed in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1. Content of the GTE and PLA drink**

	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>GTE</b>	<b>PLA</b>
mg / 330 mL can	Caffeine	120.4	10
	GC	55.1	0
	EGC	5.5	0
	C	181.1	0
	EC	47	0
	EGCG	207.5	0
	GCG	31	0
	ECG	25.6	0
	GC	0	0
Total mg / 330 mL can	Catechins	559	0
	Caffeine	120.4	10
Total mg / day	Catechins	1119	0
	Caffeine	240.8	20

Abbreviations: GC, gallocatechin; EGC, epigallocatechin; C, catechin; EC, epicatechin; EGCG, epigallocatechin gallate; GCG, gallocatechingallate; ECG, epicatechingallate; GC, gallocatechin.

Participants were instructed to consume two drinks per day, one drink an hour prior to breakfast and another drink an hour prior to dinner. The supplementation period started on the day following the pre-supplementation trial. Subjects received daily reminders in the form of text messages in the morning and the evening to ensure compliance. Participants returned to the human performance lab on D8 having consumed the drinks for 7 days. The 24 hour period prior to D0 trial participants were asked to record a food diary which was replicated prior to D8 trial.

### **2.3.1.5 Sample collection**

All blood samples were stored on ice for no longer than 35 minutes. Subsequently, plasma was separated by centrifugation (1500xg, 10 minutes, 4°C), aliquoted in 1 mL samples and stored at -80°C.

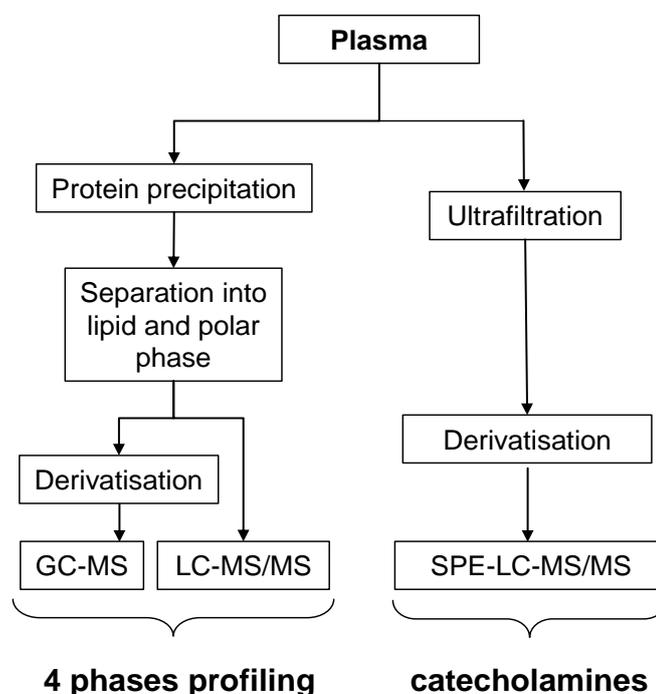
## **2.3.2 Data acquisition**

### **2.3.2.1 Metabolite Profiling**

Four-phase metabolite profiling and quantification of catecholamines (Figure 2.2) were performed on human plasma samples at Metanomics Health GmbH, Berlin, Germany. Three types of mass spectrometry analyses were applied. GC-MS (gas chromatography-mass spectrometry; Agilent 6890 GC coupled to an Agilent 5973 MS-System, Agilent, Waldbronn, Germany) and LC-MS/MS (liquid chromatography-MS/MS; Agilent 1100 HPLC-System (Agilent, Waldbronn, Germany) coupled to an Applied Biosystems API4000 MS/MS-System (Applied Biosystems, Darmstadt, Germany)) were used for broad profiling, as described by van Ravenzwaay *et al.* [24]. SPE-LC-MS/MS (solid phase extraction-LC-MS/MS; Symbiosis Pharma (Spark, Emmen, Netherlands) coupled to an Applied Biosystems API4000 MS/MS-System (Applied Biosystems, Darmstadt, Germany)) was used for the determination of catecholamine concentrations. 228 metabolites fulfilled the quality criteria for relative quantification, and absolute quantification was performed for an additional 10 metabolites. From a total of 238 metabolites, 163 were known metabolites and 75 were not chemically identified with sufficient certainty (i.e. thus considered in the present study to be unknown analytes).

Technical reference samples were measured in parallel with the study samples in order to allow the relative quantification of metabolites in the study samples. These technical reference samples were generated by pooling aliquots of plasma from all study samples. A relative quantification for each metabolite was obtained by normalizing peak intensity in the study samples to the median peak intensity of the corresponding metabolite in the technical reference samples measured in the same batch. The relative quantification were log-transformed before ANOVA analysis and were back transformed ( $10^x$ ) to obtain the ratios that are presented in the tables below.

**Figure 2.2. Sample workflow: 4 phases profiling and platform of catecholamines**



### 2.3.3 Metabolite Profiling by GC-MS and LC-MS/MS

Proteins were removed from plasma samples (60  $\mu$ l) by precipitation. Subsequently polar and non-polar plasma fractions were separated for both GC-MS and LC-MS/MS analysis by adding water and a mixture of ethanol and dichloromethane. For GC-MS analyses, the non-polar fraction was treated with methanol under acidic conditions to yield the fatty acid methyl esters derived from both free fatty acids and hydrolyzed complex lipids. The polar and non-polar fractions were further derivatized with

O-methyl-hydroxyamine hydrochloride (20 mg/mL in pyridine, 50  $\mu$ L) to convert oxo-groups to O-methyloximes and subsequently with a silylating agent (MSTFA, 50  $\mu$ l) before GC-MS analysis [25]. For LC-MS/MS analyses, both fractions were reconstituted in appropriate solvent mixtures. High performance LC (HPLC) was performed by gradient elution using methanol/water/formic acid on reversed phase separation columns. Mass spectrometric detection technology was applied as described in the patent US 7196323, which allows targeted and high sensitivity “Multiple Reaction Monitoring” profiling in parallel to a full screen analysis.

For the lipid phase, the broad profiling technology determines e.g. fatty acid concentrations after acid/methanol treatment which is essential for derivatization preceding GC-MS analysis. As a consequence, complex lipids are hydrolyzed to components of the lipid backbone (i.e. glycerol) and fatty acids. Hence, the concentration of a fatty acid determined by this procedure represents the sum of its occurrence in free and in lipid-bound form. Components of the backbone can be recognized by the term (“lipid fraction “) added to the metabolite name. As an example “glycerol, lipid fraction” represents glycerol liberated from complex lipids – in contrast, “glycerol, polar fraction” represents glycerol which had been present originally in the biological sample. The use of “additional” indicates that quantification can be affected by the co-occurrence of metabolites exhibiting identical characteristics in the analytical methods. Literature data and/or comparison with alternative methods (e.g. LC-MS/MS, GC-MS) suggest that such metabolites are present at minor concentrations only.

#### *Quantification of catecholamines*

Catecholamines and their related metabolites were measured by online SPE-LC-MS/MS, as described by Yamada *et al.* [26]. Quantification was performed using stable isotope-labelled standards.

#### **2.3.4 Data analysis**

The data set comprised profiles from 318 plasma samples that were analyzed both using multivariate and univariate statistical methods. (Six samples were not considered due to labelling errors.)

*Multivariate analysis*

Multivariate analysis including PCA [principal component analysis] and PLS-DA [partial least squares/projection to latent structures-discriminant analysis] was performed using SIMCA P+ version 12 software (Umetrics, Umea, Sweden). One subject was completely excluded from the analysis due to abnormal metabolite profiles. For another subject, one specific time point (D0, t=160 min) was discarded. All metabolite data were log-transformed to better match normal distribution. Data were further centred and scaled to unit variance. Scaling to unit variance introduces a common scale for all metabolites independent on their absolute amount of variance. Thereby, the resulting models obtain robustness, i.e., they cannot be dominated by a single or few high-variance metabolites. The explorative unsupervised multivariate analysis method PCA was used for the detection of trends, patterns and groupings among samples and variables. The supervised projection method PLS-DA was used to display the maximum co-variance of metabolic data with a defined Y variable (class, categorical) in the dataset. The cross-validated cumulative  $Q^2$  value was used as a measure of the predictive value of the PLS-DA model. A  $Q^2$  value of 1 indicates maximum predictive power, whereas  $Q^2$  values close to or below 0 indicate a lack of predictive power. As a rule of thumb, models with  $Q^2_{cum} > 50\%$  are considered to be of good predictive power in this context. To account for the fact that several samples for each subject were analyzed, cross-validation was performed by the leave-on-subject out method. This ensured that cross-validation was not inappropriately facilitated by the presence of related samples (here: different time point from the same subject) in the test dataset given the usually lower intra-individual variability compared to inter-individual variability.

*Univariate analysis*

ANOVA analysis was performed using R-software package nlme [27,28]. Treatment factors “UNT” comprised all samples on D0, “GTE” all samples collected on D8 from subjects consuming GTE, and “PLA” all samples collected on D8 from subjects consuming placebo, respectively. The ANOVA mixed-effects model included the categorical fixed effects factors “treatment” (UNT, PLA, GTE) and

“time” (0, 120, 140, 150, 160, 180) and their interaction and random intercept effects for “day” and “subject”. The combination of the binary factors “day” (0, 8) and the ternary factor “treatment” (UNT, GTE, PLA) allowed for setting up the following mixed-effects model without third-order interactions.

The model specification (in R notation) was:

Fixed effects: metabolite ~ (treatment + time)^2,

Random effects: metabolite ~ 1 | day / subject.

The correlation between samples of the same subject at different times was handled by a model of type  $AR(p=1) = ARMA(p=1, q=0)$  with equidistant time steps  $time.int(1, 2, \dots, 6)$ . All study-relevant contrasts were readout in the form of treatment contrasts by selecting different factor reference levels. The t-statistics results of the ANOVA models comprised estimates, standard deviations, t-values, and p-values. Model diagnostics were conducted in four ways to ensure adequateness of model structure: (a) Residuals were inspected visually by scatter plots of standardized residuals versus fitted values: generally, residuals did not correlate with fitted values and showed homogenous variance. (b) Random subject intercepts were tested by t-Test comparing the two study arms GTE and PLA on D0. The number of significant metabolites was on false positive level. (c) Random day effects were negligible relative to other variance components. Accordingly, they do not influence other effect estimates. (Note that the random day effect was introduced only due to technical/algorithmic reasons.) (d) The AR(1) correlation coefficient (“phi”) was found to vary in a reasonable range with mean 0,14 and interquartile range from  $P25\%=0.03$  to  $P75\%=0.24$ . The t-statistics results of significantly changed metabolites are summarized in a colour coded format in the tables. The resulting numbers of significantly changed metabolites were evaluated by binomial test to account for false positives due to multiple hypotheses testing (data not shown).

## 2.4 Results

The 4-phases metabolite profiling using both GC-MS and LC-MS/MS (Figure 2.2) comprised in total of 238 metabolites including 32 amino acids and amino acid derivatives, 11 carbohydrates and related

metabolites, 10 metabolites related to energy metabolism, 3 nucleobases and related metabolites, 10 vitamin cofactors and related metabolites, 12 miscellaneous metabolites, 73 complex lipids, fatty acids and related metabolites, and 75 unknown analytes. In addition, 10 catecholamines and other monoamines were in most instances quantitatively measured using a targeted profiling method.

Initially, multivariate statistics (PCA and PLS-DA) was performed to identify outliers and to get a general idea on the variability of the data. PLS-DA clearly discriminated between exercise and resting conditions ( $Q^2_{cum}=80.5\%$ ). Furthermore, a clear separation was observed between pre- and post-GTE-supplementation. ( $Q^2_{cum}=51.5\%$  including all time points;  $Q^2_{cum}=49.2\%$  including time points 140-180 min and subjects of the GTE study arm). Other models discriminating between the GTE and the PLA interventions under resting and exercise conditions, respectively, were not significant indicating that inter-individual differences might dominate the discrimination over treatment and/or exercise. Based on this overall impression, a univariate ANOVA mixed-effects model was calculated and clearly identified statistically significant changes in individual metabolites that could be attributed to the effect induced by exercise or the GTE supplement.

#### 2.4.1 Effect of exercise on human metabolism

Table 2.2 illustrates the metabolite changes induced by moderate intensity exercise in all subjects pre-supplementation (UNT). The changes during exercise (140, 150, 160, 180 min) were compared to resting conditions at the end of the two hour rest period (120 min). They comprised of increases in indicators of glycolysis (lactate and pyruvate), indicators of lipolysis (glycerol), TCA cycle intermediates (citrate, fumarate, malate, succinate), indicators of adenine catabolism (uric acid), accelerated protein synthesis (uridine, pseudouridine), indicators of hormonal activity (cortisol, dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate), catecholamines (DOPAC, DOPA, DOPEG, HMPG, 5-HIAA, HVA, noradrenaline), vitamins and related metabolites (4-pyridoxic acid, panthenic acid, cryptoxanthin), certain fatty acids (e.g. arachidonic acid, linoleic acid), certain phospholipids (e.g. choline plasmalogen, lysophosphatidylcholine (C18:0)), certain sphingolipids (e.g. ceramide (C18:1,C24:0)),

**Table 2.2. ANOVA estimate for effect of exercise on metabolome derived from data from pre-supplementation (UNT).**

METABOLITE	time / min	140	150	160	180
		vs 120	vs 120	vs 120	vs 120
Alanine		1.30	1.33	1.37	1.33
Cysteine (additional: Cystine)		1.07	1.06	1.10	1.11
Methionine		1.05	1.03	1.08	1.12
Phenylalanine		1.05	1.06	1.07	1.11
Tyrosine		1.04	1.05	1.07	1.13
4-Hydroxyphenylpyruvate		1.15	1.20	1.27	1.30
Ketoleucine		1.27	1.23	1.18	1.18
trans-4-Hydroxyproline		0.91	0.89	0.89	0.87
Urea		0.99	1.07	1.02	1.08
Erythrol		1.09	1.08	1.12	1.16
Glucosamine		1.16	1.12	1.12	1.18
Glucose		1.04	1.02	1.04	1.02
Mannosamine		1.14	1.12	1.17	1.17
Mannose		0.94	0.82	0.77	0.70
myo-Inositol		1.04	1.03	1.08	1.12
Sucrose		0.90	0.72	0.87	0.81
Cholesterol No 02		1.04	1.06	1.04	1.00
Cholesterol, total		1.06	1.07	1.05	1.04
Cholesterylester C16:0		1.10	0.97	1.01	1.00
Cholesterylester C18:1		1.02	1.10	1.10	1.09
Cholesterylester C18:2		1.03	1.09	1.07	1.12
Cholesterylester C20:4		1.02	1.04	1.02	1.08
Glycerol, lipid fraction		1.00	0.96	0.94	0.93
Pentadecanol		1.02	1.02	1.13	1.13
Taurochenodeoxycholic acid (additional: Taurodeoxycholic acid)		1.25	1.67	1.14	0.96
Arachidonic acid (C20:cis[5,8,11,14]4)		1.08	1.05	1.04	1.04
Behenic acid (C22:0)		1.08	1.04	1.05	1.02
conjugated Linoleic acid (C18:trans[9,11]2) (add.: conjugated Linoleic acid (C18:cis[9]trans[11]2))		1.06	1.07	1.08	1.07
dihomo-gamma-Linolenic acid		1.09	1.07	1.08	1.04
Docosahexaenoic acid (C22:cis[4,7,10,13,16,19]6)		1.09	1.05	1.04	1.05
Eicosapentaenoic acid (C20:cis[5,8,11,14,17]5)		1.08	1.04	1.01	1.01
gamma-Linolenic acid (C18:cis[6,9,12]3)		1.08	1.04	1.06	1.03
Isopalmitic acid (C16:0)		1.06	1.05	1.04	1.03
Lignoceric acid (C24:0)		1.05	1.01	1.03	1.03
Linoleic acid (C18:cis[9,12]2)		1.06	1.04	1.04	1.02
Myristic acid (C14:0)		1.05	1.06	1.09	1.17
Nervonic acid (C24:cis[15]1)		1.09	1.03	1.06	1.04
Palmitic acid (C16:0)		1.04	1.03	1.04	1.04
Palmitoleic acid (C16:cis[9]1)		1.06	1.06	1.07	1.10
Stearic acid (C18:0)		1.03	1.02	1.01	1.02
Tricosanoic acid (C23:0)		1.10	1.06	1.05	1.03
DAG (C18:1,C18:2)		1.09	1.09	1.10	1.12
TAG (C16:0,C16:1)		0.98	0.89	0.88	0.89
TAG (C16:0,C18:2)		0.97	0.91	0.93	0.93
TAG (C18:1,C18:2)		0.95	0.89	0.93	0.90
TAG (C18:2,C18:2)		0.98	0.97	0.97	0.93
Galactose, lipid fraction		1.09	1.04	1.07	1.05
Glucose, lipid fraction		1.20	1.15	1.26	1.10
myo-Inositol, lipid fraction		1.05	1.06	1.05	1.05
Cortisol		1.11	1.11	1.06	1.10
Dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (additional: Testosterone-17-sulfate)		1.18	1.10	1.14	1.20
Pseudouridine		1.02	1.05	1.03	1.08
Uric acid		1.03	1.03	1.07	1.07
Uridine		1.04	1.04	1.09	1.10

METABOLITE	time / min	140	150	160	180
		vs 120	vs 120	vs 120	vs 120
Choline plasmalogen (C18,C20:4)		1.05	1.03	1.05	1.03
Glycerol phosphate, lipid fraction		1.11	1.08	1.06	1.01
Lysophosphatidylcholine (C18:0)		1.13	1.07	1.02	1.02
Lysophosphatidylcholine (C18:1)		0.98	0.95	0.99	0.90
Lysophosphatidylcholine (C18:2)		1.02	1.00	1.03	0.92
Lysophosphatidylcholine (C20:4)		0.99	0.97	0.94	0.91
Phosphatidylcholine (C16:0,C16:0)		1.04	1.04	1.02	1.03
Phosphatidylcholine (C16:1,C18:2)		1.01	1.03	1.06	1.03
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:0,C18:1)		1.02	1.02	1.01	1.00
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:0,C18:2)		0.99	1.00	0.99	1.00
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:0,C20:4)		1.00	1.00	1.01	1.01
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:0,C22:6)		1.04	1.03	1.02	1.03
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:2,C20:4) (additional: Phosphatidylcholine (C16:0,C22:6))		1.00	1.00	1.01	1.00
1-Hydroxy-2-amino-(cis,trans)-3,5- octadecadiene (from sphingolipids)		1.11	1.08	1.03	1.06
3-O-Methylsphingosine (add.: Sphingolipids, erythro-Sphingosine, threo-Sphingosine)		1.13	1.09	1.03	1.06
5-O-Methylsphingosine (add.: Sphingolipids, erythro-Sphingosine, threo-Sphingosine)		1.12	1.07	1.03	1.09
Ceramide (d18:1,C24:0)		1.11	1.07	1.05	1.05
Ceramide (d18:1,C24:1) (additional: Ceramide (d18:2,C24:0))		1.14	1.06	1.11	1.07
erythro-C16-Sphingosine		1.09	1.07	0.96	1.03
erythro-Dihydrosphingosine		1.10	1.06	1.02	1.05
erythro-Sphingosine (additional: Sphingolipids)		1.10	1.07	1.03	1.06
Sphingomyelin (d18:1,C16:0)		1.06	1.05	1.08	1.11
Sphingomyelin (d18:1,C24:0)		1.05	1.02	1.04	0.99
threo-Sphingosine (additional: Sphingolipids)		1.11	1.07	1.04	1.07
2-Hydroxybutyrate		0.81	0.75	0.72	0.74
3-Hydroxybutyrate		0.84	0.95	1.14	1.54
Citrate (additional: Isocitrate)		0.98	1.02	1.09	1.14
Fumarate		1.17	1.20	1.17	1.14
Lactate		2.73	2.52	2.46	2.06
Malate		1.85	1.89	1.84	1.79
Pyruvate (additional: Phosphoenolpyruvate (PEP))		2.29	2.22	2.32	2.24
Succinate		2.08	2.16	2.33	2.32
3,4-Dihydroxyphenylacetic acid (DOPAC)		1.10	1.21	1.24	1.40
3,4-Dihydroxyphenylalanine (DOPA)		1.05	1.11	1.12	1.14
3,4-Dihydroxyphenylglycol (DOPEG)		1.32	1.53	1.61	1.81
4-Hydroxy-3-methoxyphenylglycol (HMPG)		1.05	1.17	1.26	1.49
5-Hydroxy-3-indoleacetic acid (5-HIAA)		1.05	1.09	1.11	1.16
Homovanillic acid (HVA)		1.09	1.17	1.25	1.43
Noradrenaline (Norepinephrine)		2.61	2.81	2.82	3.09
Serotonin (5-HT)		1.16	0.96	1.20	1.49
Canthaxanthin		1.03	1.11	1.11	1.29
Creatine		1.08	1.12	1.17	1.26
Cryptoxanthin		1.13	1.07	1.09	1.06
Glycerol, polar fraction		1.44	1.62	1.79	2.24
Hippuric acid		1.17	1.21	1.30	1.28
Phosphocreatine		0.86	0.92	0.77	0.87
Taurine		1.04	1.04	1.13	1.20
4-Pyridoxic acid		1.11	1.11	1.18	1.20
alpha-Tocopherol		1.06	1.00	0.98	1.02
Coenzyme Q10		1.07	0.99	1.01	0.99
Nicotinamide		0.78	0.77	0.77	0.81
Pantothenic acid		1.31	1.27	1.35	1.37
Threonic acid		1.07	1.06	1.05	1.14

Data presented here is the relative concentration expressed as ratios. This data was log transformed prior to ANOVA statistical analysis. Colour coding: ratio > 1 & p-value < 0.01 (■) ratio > 1 & 0.01 ≤ p-value < 0.05 (■) ratio > 1 & 0.05 ≤ p-value < 0.10 (■) ratio < 1 & 0.05 ≤ p-value < 0.10 (■) ratio < 1 & 0.01 ≤ p-value < 0.05 (■) ratio < 1 & p-value < 0.01 (■) Font coding: black & bold: (ratio < 0.5) or (ratio > 2) black & normal: (0.5 ≤ ratio < 0.9) or (1.1 < ratio ≤ 2) black & italic: 0.9 ≤ ratio ≤ 1.1.

erthro-sphingosine), certain cholesterylester (e.g. cholesterylester C18:2), several amino acids (alanine, cysteine, methionine, phenylalanine, tyrosine), and miscellaneous metabolites (creatine, taurine, hippuric acid). Only a small number of these metabolites increased considerably during exercise with a ratio  $> 2$  (Table 2.2). These included lactate, pyruvate, succinate, noradrenaline, and glycerol. On the other hand, some metabolites were reduced during exercise, such as 2-hydroxybutyrate, trans-4-hydroxyproline, mannose, certain triacylglycerides (TG) and nicotinamide. The onset of exercise caused a significant reduction in 3-hydroxybutyrate, followed by a subsequent increase towards the end of exercise indicating an initial increase in fat oxidation at the onset of exercise with a delay in fatty acid mobilisation and availability late throughout exercise. The onset of exercise also increased the levels of certain fatty acids and sphingolipids. Other metabolites such as pseudourine, uric acid, uridine, taurine, serotonin, and certain cholesterylesters only showed changes towards the end of exercise.

#### **2.4.2 Effect of GTE under resting condition**

The effect of GTE under resting conditions was assessed by comparing the metabolite profiles from post-GTE-supplementation (GTE–D8) versus pre-supplementation (UNT– D0) and from post-GTE-supplementation (GTE –D8) versus post-PLA-supplementation (PLA–D8). As a control, the profiles from post-PLA-supplementation (PLA–D8) were compared to pre-supplementation (UNT–D0) (Table 2.3). To assess the impact of 7-days supplementation of GTE under resting fasted conditions only the profiles recorded at time point 0 on each intervention day were taken into account.

Caffeine, hippuric acid, homovanillic acid and 3,4-dihydroxyphenylacetate were elevated post-GTE-supplementation. Caffeine was present in the GTE supplement and hence the presence of caffeine in plasma on D8 was considered as a measure of compliance. The relative concentrations of caffeine are displayed in Figure 2.3. The appearance of hippuric acid, homovanillic acid and 3,4-dihydroxyphenylacetate are known metabolites from gut-microbial degradation of polyphenols [29]. Besides these exogenous effects, GTE induced reductions in di- and triacylglycerides (DAG, TAG), certain fatty acids, certain phosphatidylcholines, alanine, tryptophan, creatine, urea, serotonin, and 5-

hydroxy-3-indoleacetic acid (5-HIAA). Higher concentrations were observed for certain cholesterylesters, 3-hydroxybutyrate, citrate, lactaldehyde, and glycerol (Figure 2.4).

**Table 2.3. ANOVA estimate for effect of GTE on metabolome under fasting and resting condition.**

METABOLITE	PLA-D8 vs UNT-D0	GTE-D8 vs UNT-D0	GTE-D8 vs PLA-D8
Alanine	1.10	0.93	0.85
Asparagine	1.10	1.01	0.91
Threonine	1.09	1.00	0.92
Tryptophan	1.04	0.93	0.89
Ketoleucine	0.88	0.97	1.11
Urea	1.00	0.82	0.81
Cholesterylester C18:1	0.93	1.13	1.22
Cholesterylester C18:2	0.91	1.13	1.24
Cholesterylester C20:4	0.95	1.11	1.17
Glycerol, lipid fraction	1.15	0.87	0.76
Pentadecanol	1.06	0.88	0.84
Docosahexaenoic acid (C22:cis[4,7,10,13,16,19]6)	1.14	0.83	0.73
Eicosapentaenoic acid (C20:cis[5,8,11,14,17]5)	1.31	0.84	0.64
Isopalmitic acid (C16:0)	1.13	0.92	0.81
Myristic acid (C14:0)	1.23	1.04	0.85
DAG (C18:1,C18:2)	1.06	0.88	0.83
TAG (C16:0,C16:1)	1.27	0.87	0.69
TAG (C16:0,C18:2)	1.13	0.88	0.78
TAG (C18:2,C18:2)	1.09	0.82	0.75
TAG (C18:2,C18:3)	1.26	0.68	0.54
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:0,C22:6)	1.05	0.87	0.82
Phosphatidylcholine No 02	1.06	0.94	0.88
Sphingomyelin (d18:1,C16:0)	0.91	1.07	1.18
3-Hydroxybutyrate	0.74	1.63	2.21
Citrate (additional: Isocitrate)	1.02	1.22	1.20
Lactaldehyde	0.93	1.13	1.22
3,4-Dihydroxyphenylacetic acid (DOPAC)	1.20	1.61	1.34
5-Hydroxy-3-indoleacetic acid (5-HIAA)	1.09	0.95	0.87
Homovanillic acid (HVA)	1.07	1.50	1.41
Serotonin (5-HT)	1.39	0.73	0.52
Caffeine	1.45	5.64	3.88
Creatine	1.12	0.86	0.77
Glycerol, polar fraction	0.82	1.11	1.36
Hippuric acid	0.80	1.64	2.04
Ascorbic acid (additional: Glucose)	1.13	1.03	0.91

Data presented here is the relative concentration expressed as ratios. This data was log transformed prior to ANOVA statistical analysis. Colour coding: ratio > 1 & p-value < 0.01 (■) ratio > 1 & 0.01 ≤ p-value < 0.05 (■) ratio > 1 & 0.05 ≤ p-value < 0.10 (■) ratio < 1 & 0.05 ≤ p-value < 0.10 (■) ratio < 1 & 0.01 ≤ p-value < 0.05 (■) ratio < 1 & p-value < 0.01 (■) Font coding: black & bold: (ratio < 0.5) or (ratio > 2) black & normal: (0.5 ≤ ratio < 0.9) or (1.1 < ratio ≤ 2) black & italic: 0.9 ≤ ratio ≤ 1.1.

### 2.4.3 Effect of GTE during exercise

The ANOVA mixed-effects model segregated the effects induced by GTE or PLA during exercise from those induced by exercise alone. Table 2.4 lists the metabolite changes solely caused by GTE or PLA during exercise. The following comparisons were made: Post-GTE-supplementation (GTE–D8) versus pre-supplementation (UNT–D0), post-GTE-supplementation (GTE–D8) versus post-PLA-supplementation (PLA–D8), and - as a control - post-PLA-supplementation (PLA–D8) versus pre-supplementation (UNT–D0). The effects of GTE or PLA during exercise were assessed after 20, 30, 40 and 60 minutes of exercise. The data were normalized to the end of the 2 hour rest period ( $t=120$  min) (Figure 2.1) to focus on the effects induced during exercise and to eliminate any effects that accounted for resting conditions and were apparent in shifts in baseline levels at time points 0 and 120 min. Our study design included the 7 days (chronic) supplementation as well as the single bolus (acute) intake of either GTE or PLA on D8. It is thought that 7 days GTE supplementation would mostly affect plasma metabolites that were measured under resting conditions at time point 0, whereas the single bolus intake prior to the trial on D8 would determine the effects during exercise. The reason for this is that the main components of GTE would have accumulated in plasma after the two hours of rest [29]. Thus, by normalizing the metabolite changes to the end of the 2 hour rest period (120 min), the effects during exercise may at first instance be ascribed to the main components in GTE boosted by the single bolus intake. Overall, the metabolite changes induced by GTE during exercise were weaker than the effects induced by exercise itself. Nevertheless, significant metabolite changes were observed both when comparing the effect of GTE – D8 versus UNT – D0 and the effect of GTE – D8 versus PLA – D8 (Table 2.4). These changes comprised of the increase in alanine, cysteine, histidine, certain cholesterylesters, lactate, malate, pyruvate, hippurate, and phosphocreatine. In addition, reductions in 3-hydroxybutyrate, certain fatty acids, certain TAGs, and DOPEG were apparent during exercise (Figure 2.4). Other changes could not fully be attributed to the GTE supplementation. These may be due to day-to-day variations or the PLA supplementation. For example, glycerol, glutamate, TAG (C16:0,C16:1), noradrenaline, serotonin and taurine were reduced in GTE – D8 when compared to PLA – D8. However, these changes were not seen when comparing GTE - D8 versus UNT – D0. On the other hand, these changes were increased when comparing the effect of PLA – D8 versus UNT – D0.



METABOLITE	PLA-D8 vs UNT-D0				GTE-D8 vs UNT-D0				GTE-D8 vs PLA-D8			
	140 vs 120	150 vs 120	160 vs 120	180 vs 120	140 vs 120	150 vs 120	160 vs 120	180 vs 120	140 vs 120	150 vs 120	160 vs 120	180 vs 120
Alanine	0.97	1.00	0.94	0.97	1.12	1.14	1.11	1.18	1.16	1.14	1.19	1.22
Aspartate	1.15	1.18	1.26	1.36	1.17	1.13	1.44	1.22	1.02	0.96	1.14	0.90
Cysteine (additional: Cystine)	1.00	1.00	0.95	0.94	1.16	1.13	1.07	1.10	1.16	1.14	1.13	1.17
Glutamate	1.13	1.26	1.08	1.21	0.94	1.02	0.85	0.93	0.83	0.81	0.79	0.77
Histidine	0.95	0.99	0.98	0.97	1.08	1.07	1.08	1.09	1.14	1.09	1.10	1.12
Urea	0.97	0.86	0.89	0.86	1.02	0.88	0.95	0.88	1.05	1.03	1.07	1.02
Sucrose	1.71	1.36	1.48	1.75	1.51	1.75	1.24	1.12	0.88	1.29	0.84	0.64
Cholesterylester C18:2	1.00	1.04	1.00	0.93	1.06	1.04	1.06	1.05	1.05	1.00	1.07	1.13
Cholesterylester C20:4	0.96	0.97	0.98	0.95	1.00	1.00	1.06	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.08	1.09
conjugated Linoleic acid (C18:trans[9,11]2) (add.: conjugated Linoleic acid (C18:cis[9]trans[11]2))	0.93	0.97	0.98	0.95	0.91	0.93	0.91	0.96	0.98	0.96	0.93	1.01
dihomo-gamma-Linolenic acid (C20:cis[8,11,14]3)	0.93	0.97	0.96	0.98	0.95	0.98	0.94	0.99	1.03	1.01	0.99	1.01
Eicosanoic acid (C20:0)	1.02	1.09	1.07	1.09	1.01	1.06	0.98	1.08	0.99	0.97	0.92	0.99
gamma-Linolenic acid (C18:cis[6,9,12]3)	0.89	0.91	0.92	0.88	0.94	0.98	0.91	0.98	1.05	1.09	0.99	1.11
Heptadecanoic acid (C17:0)	0.98	1.08	1.10	1.03	0.96	0.97	0.99	0.92	0.99	0.90	0.90	0.89
Linoleic acid (C18:cis[9,12]2)	0.98	0.98	1.01	1.01	0.95	0.95	0.93	0.99	0.97	0.97	0.92	0.98
Myristic acid (C14:0)	0.95	0.99	1.02	0.93	0.89	0.95	0.91	0.93	0.94	0.96	0.89	1.00
Oleic acid (C18:cis[9]1)	0.99	1.01	1.04	1.02	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.98	0.93	0.93	0.89	0.97
Palmitic acid (C16:0)	0.98	0.99	1.02	1.01	0.94	0.96	0.93	0.99	0.96	0.97	0.91	0.98
Palmitoleic acid (C16:cis[9]1)	0.99	1.02	1.06	1.04	0.87	0.91	0.88	0.95	0.88	0.89	0.84	0.91
TAG (C16:0,C16:1)	1.09	1.19	1.14	1.15	0.98	1.02	0.96	0.97	0.90	0.86	0.84	0.85
TAG (C16:0,C18:2)	1.09	1.09	1.06	1.06	0.99	0.97	0.96	0.94	0.91	0.90	0.90	0.89
TAG (C18:2,C18:2)	1.01	1.04	1.07	1.02	0.96	0.91	0.92	0.94	0.95	0.88	0.86	0.91
TAG (C18:2,C18:3)	1.11	1.12	0.96	1.07	0.91	0.93	0.79	0.92	0.82	0.83	0.82	0.86
myo-Inositol, lipid fraction	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.94	0.94	0.95	0.91	0.92	0.99	0.99	0.96	0.98
Choline plasmalogen (C18,C20:4)	1.02	1.03	0.99	1.01	0.95	0.98	0.95	0.99	0.94	0.95	0.96	0.98
Lysophosphatidylcholine (C18:2)	0.98	0.95	0.87	0.95	0.96	0.91	0.87	0.88	0.98	0.96	1.00	0.93
Phosphatidylcholine (C16:0,C20:4) (additional: Phosphatidylcholine (C18:2,C18:2))	0.99	1.00	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.02
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:0,C20:4)	0.99	1.00	0.99	0.99	1.01	1.02	0.98	1.03	1.02	1.03	1.00	1.04
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:0,C22:6)	1.00	1.02	1.00	0.99	0.98	0.96	0.99	0.97	0.98	0.95	0.99	0.98
Phosphatidylcholine (C18:2,C20:4) (additional: Phosphatidylcholine (C16:0,C22:6))	1.01	1.02	1.01	1.01	0.99	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.97	0.98	0.99	1.00
Phosphatidylcholine No 02	1.02	0.99	1.01	1.05	1.10	1.05	1.13	1.10	1.08	1.05	1.11	1.05
Ceramide (d18:1,C24:1) (additional: Ceramide (d18:2,C24:0))	1.04	1.14	1.02	1.06	0.91	0.99	0.95	1.01	0.88	0.87	0.93	0.95
Sphingomyelin (d18:1,C16:0)	1.00	0.98	0.98	0.83	0.92	0.95	0.98	0.99	0.92	0.96	1.00	1.19
3-Hydroxybutyrate	1.08	1.18	1.11	1.06	0.77	0.73	0.73	0.69	0.71	0.62	0.66	0.65
Lactaldehyde	1.09	1.03	1.06	1.14	1.04	0.87	1.03	1.24	0.96	0.85	0.97	1.09
Lactate	1.03	1.11	1.03	1.10	1.38	1.54	1.45	1.39	1.34	1.39	1.41	1.26
Malate	1.02	1.07	1.11	1.21	1.15	1.21	1.40	1.26	1.12	1.12	1.26	1.04
Pyruvate (add.: Phosphoenolpyruvate (PEP))	1.03	1.10	1.00	1.07	1.31	1.42	1.34	1.32	1.27	1.30	1.34	1.24
Succinate	0.93	1.03	0.90	0.99	1.15	1.12	1.07	1.03	1.23	1.09	1.18	1.03
3,4-Dihydroxyphenylglycol (DOPEG)	1.08	1.02	1.09	1.05	0.94	0.92	0.88	0.90	0.87	0.90	0.81	0.86
Noradrenaline (Norepinephrine)	1.09	1.16	1.27	1.31	1.02	1.06	1.12	1.00	0.93	0.92	0.88	0.77
Serotonin (5-HT)	1.11	2.12	1.42	2.86	0.75	0.86	0.88	0.83	0.67	0.41	0.62	0.29
Cortisol	1.16	1.22	1.14	1.08	0.94	0.94	0.96	1.03	0.81	0.77	0.84	0.96
Dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (additional: Testosterone-17-sulfate)	0.99	1.04	1.05	1.05	0.85	0.87	0.81	0.97	0.85	0.84	0.78	0.93
Canthaxanthin	1.08	1.22	1.09	1.20	0.95	0.90	0.87	0.88	0.88	0.73	0.80	0.73
Glycerol, polar fraction	1.18	1.27	1.21	1.24	0.96	0.99	1.00	1.03	0.81	0.78	0.83	0.83
Hippuric acid	1.03	1.24	1.06	1.00	1.27	1.37	1.32	1.57	1.23	1.10	1.24	1.57
Phosphocreatine	0.85	0.71	1.17	0.93	1.43	1.24	1.51	1.34	1.68	1.75	1.29	1.44
Taurine	1.07	1.13	1.06	1.22	0.96	0.98	0.95	0.99	0.90	0.87	0.90	0.81
4-Pyridoxic acid	0.86	0.90	0.81	0.82	1.05	1.10	0.98	1.00	1.22	1.22	1.21	1.21
beta-Carotene	1.03	1.10	1.03	0.98	0.89	1.06	1.07	1.14	0.86	0.96	1.04	1.17

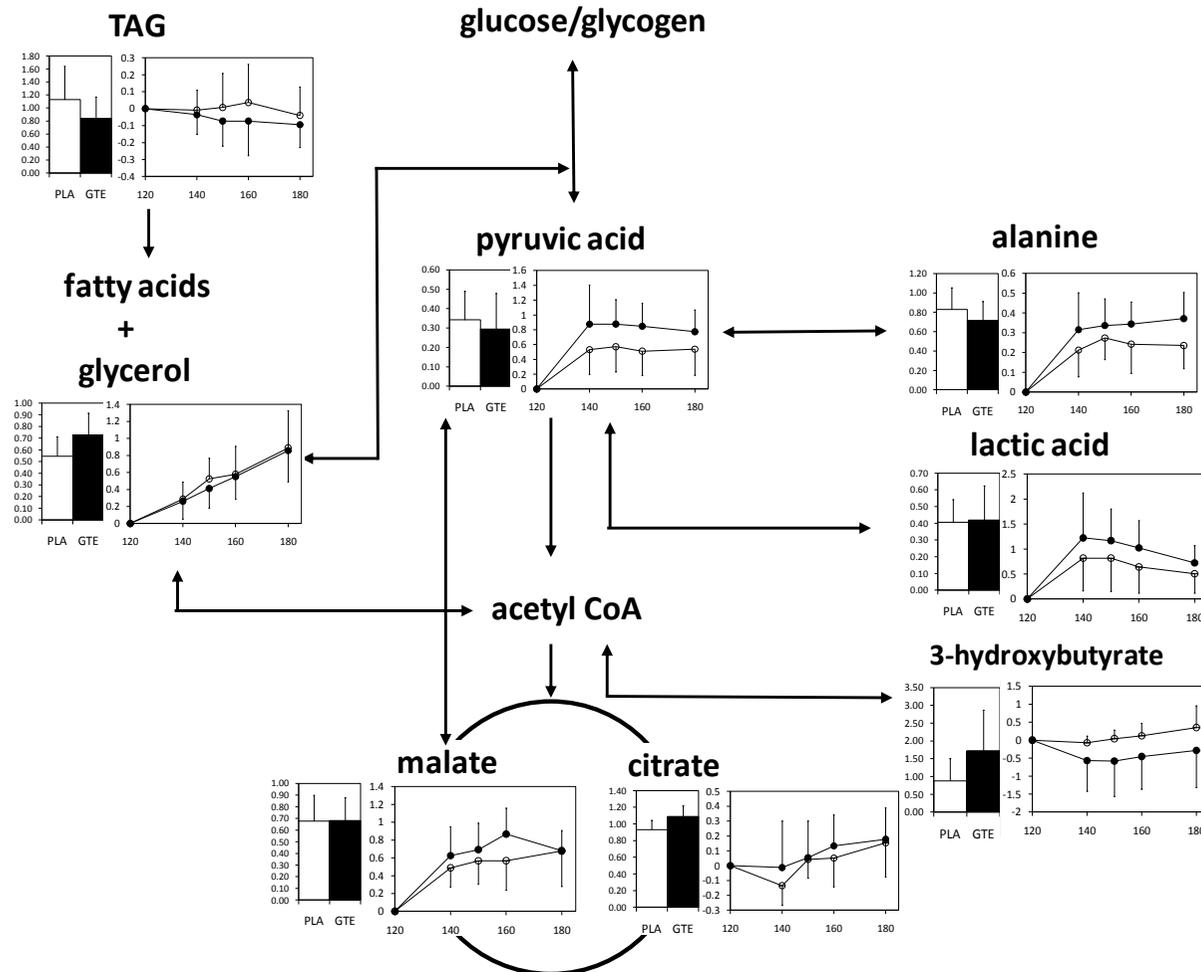
**Table 2.4. ANOVA estimate for effect of GTE on metabolome during exercise.**

Data presented here is the relative concentration expressed as ratios. This data was log transformed prior to ANOVA statistical analysis. Colour coding: ratio > 1 & p-value < 0.01 (■) ratio > 1 & 0.01 ≤ p-value < 0.05 (■) ratio > 1 & 0.05 ≤ p-value < 0.10 (■) ratio < 1 & 0.05 ≤ p-value < 0.10 (■) ratio < 1 & 0.01 ≤ p-value < 0.05 (■) ratio < 1 & p-value < 0.01 (■) Font coding: black & bold: ( ratio < 0.5 ) or ( ratio > 2) black & normal: ( 0.5 ≤ ratio < 0.9 ) or ( 1.1 < ratio ≤ 2 ) black & italic: 0.9 ≤ ratio ≤ 1.1.

## 2.5 Discussion

By applying untargeted GC-MS- and LC-MS-based metabolite profiling to human plasma, we have been able to comprehensively investigate the metabolic responses following GTE supplementation at rest and during moderate intensity exercise. The main finding of the current study was that 7 days GTE supplementation resulted in different metabolic effects during rest and exercise when compared to PLA and UNT. In particular, GTE altered metabolite concentrations involved in the intermediary metabolism (Figure 2.4). At rest GTE induced metabolite changes indicative of enhanced lipolysis (increase in glycerol, reduction in TAGs, increased fat oxidation (increase in 3-hydroxybutyrate), activated TCA cycle (increase in citrate), reduced amino acid catabolism (reduction in urea and creatine), reduced Cori-cycle (reduction in alanine), and enhanced glycolysis (increase in lactaldehyde). These metabolite changes suggest that GTE has the potential to enhance aerobic energy and fat metabolism at rest. Metabolic effects related to oxidative energy metabolism have previously been observed using a <sup>1</sup>H-NMR metabolic profiling in human urine following 2 days of GTE supplementation [30]. Our results are also in line with a number of studies that have demonstrated increases in whole body EE and fat oxidation during resting conditions following GTE supplementation [7,11,12]. However, a number of studies have reported no difference in FFA or glycerol concentrations despite changes in whole body measures of fat oxidation [13,31,32]. In the current study fat oxidation rates were not measured during the rest period. Therefore, it cannot finally be concluded whether the metabolite changes related to fat metabolism (glycerol or 3-hydroxybutyrate) would have induced changes in fat oxidation.

**Figure 2.4 Plasma metabolite concentrations of GTE versus PLA during rest (bar graph) and during exercise (line graph) illustrated as part of the intermediary metabolism. Black circles and white circles represent GTE and PLA respectively. Data are means  $\pm$  SD. The x-axis of the line graphs indicate time in minutes**



In comparison, GTE supplementation resulted in contrasting effects during exercise. GTE caused metabolite changes that are associated with enhanced glycolysis (increase in pyruvate, lactate), enhanced Cori-cycle (increase in alanine), and decreased fat oxidation (reduction in 3-hydroxybutyrate) when compared to PLA and UNT. These changes suggest an enhancement in anaerobic energy metabolism. This result is somewhat unexpected, since several previous studies have reported that acute [15] and chronic [16] GTE supplementation have the ability to induce greater fat oxidation rates over and above that of exercise alone, potentially through stimulating lipolysis as illustrated by higher concentrations of glycerol [15]. In the current study no change in lipolytic metabolites (glycerol) were observed during exercise. This may be explained in part by the increase in lactate concentration considering that lactate is known to inhibit lipolysis and limit fat oxidation rates during exercise [33]. The high lactate concentrations were unexpected due to the moderate exercise intensity implemented in the study. The accumulation of pyruvate and lactate and the reduction in 3-hydroxybutyrate indicate a lower pyruvate oxidation through acetyl-CoA (Figure 2.4). It is notable that we observed no difference in fat oxidation rates during exercise following GTE supplementation when compared to PLA and UNT (data not shown) suggesting that these metabolite changes were too weak to cause changes in physiological parameters.

In the current study, we also used targeted profiling of catecholamines in order to elucidate whether GTE supplementation is able to stimulate the adrenergic system. Fat metabolism can be activated by stimulating the adrenergic response. Not surprisingly, in the present study exercise alone induced significant changes of 14 metabolites involved in the catecholamine metabolism. EGCG, a major catechin in GTE, has been suggested to directly inhibit COMT (catechol-O-methyltransferase) [18] an enzyme that is responsible for degrading catecholamines (NA and A). The current hypothesis is that degrading these catecholamines leads to attenuation of sympathetic nervous system (SNS) activity. The inhibition of COMT and thus reduced degradation of NA would result in an increase in EE, lipolysis and potentially an increase in fat oxidation [10]. A limited number of studies have shown that GTE supplementation increases catecholamine concentrations following acute GTE supplementation

[14,34,35]. However, the actual contribution of this mechanism to reported effects of GTE in humans remains unclear. In our study GTE did not increase NA and directly related metabolites either at rest or during exercise. This result suggests that GTE supplementation may not alter the activity of COMT and thus questions the efficacy of the widely referenced COMT mechanism in humans. Interestingly during the resting condition metabolites indicative of lipolysis were elevated, which may occur through a cascade of events activated by catecholamines of the adrenergic system [33]. However, since no differences in NA and A were observed also during resting conditions, this could suggest that GTE stimulated lipolysis via non-adrenergic mechanisms. The non-adrenergic mechanisms could include the up-regulation of lipid-metabolizing enzymes by NF- $\kappa$ B (29). Alternatively, augmented lipolysis may be explained by the action of caffeine rather than the effects of green tea catechins. Caffeine has been shown to stimulate lipolysis independent of changes in catecholamines [36] via antagonizing adenosine receptors directly on adipocytes [37]. However, it is not known whether green tea catechins are able to elicit direct effects on adipose tissue similar to that of caffeine.

This is the first study to directly compare the metabolic responses to GTE supplementation between resting and during moderate intensity exercise conditions. Significant differences in metabolic responses at rest and during exercise following GTE supplementation were observed. Similar results were observed in a previous study showing that the ingestion of capsinoids - which are non-pungent analogues of capsaicin (8-methyl-N-vanillyl-6-nonenamide) naturally present in sweet pepper - increased adrenergic activity and energy expenditure at rest but had little effect during exercise [38]. It could be argued that during exercise GTE was not potent enough to further enhance an already stimulated environment. In comparison, GTE may offer stimulatory effects to human metabolism under resting conditions. The apparent difference in the metabolic response at rest and during exercise may be rooted in differences between chronic and acute GTE supplementation. In the current study, the metabolic effects observed during rest can be largely attributed to the chronic effects of GTE (7 days). In comparison the metabolic effects observed during exercise could be argued to be induced by the acute effects (single dose) post GTE supplementation. Thus, an increase in EE and fat oxidation

and their related metabolic effects may only be present after chronic GTE supplementation. Chronic supplementation may induce a progressive regulation of various proteins and enzymes at certain sites in the body resulting in a systemic shift on the endogenous metabolism after long-term supplementation. For example, chronic GTE supplementation (8-24 wk) has been demonstrated to alter the gene expression related to energy metabolism and lipid homeostasis in an animal model [39]. However, the authors acknowledge that while the study design is capable of detecting chronic effects (7 days) at rest, the metabolic effects during exercise are induced both by acute and chronic GTE supplementation combined. Therefore, future research is required to tease out the differential metabolic effects between acute and chronic GTE supplementation both at rest and during exercise.

Alternatively, the apparent difference in the metabolic effects at rest and during exercise may be attributed to different bioactive components in GTE and/or the presence of caffeine known to be crucial factors ultimately influencing the rates of fat or carbohydrate oxidation [40]. The single dose of GTE or PLA consumed two hours before the exercise test during the post-supplementation trial increased the concentrations of directly absorbed components in GTE such as catechins, in particular EGCG, and caffeine (Figure 2.3) and may be responsible for the effects observed during exercise. In comparison, phenolic metabolites originating from gut microbial degradation of polyphenols usually only appear in circulation 3-4 hours after polyphenol consumption [29] and are unlikely to be responsible for the effect during exercise. However, they could have contributed to the chronic effects observed at rest. Following 7-days GTE supplementation, some phenolic acids such as hippuric acid, homovanillic acid and 3,4-dihydroxyphenylacetic acid were increased in plasma at rest due to the slow bioconversion of polyphenols by gut microbiota. Nutrient – gut microbiota interactions have previously been discussed to play an important role in polyphenol bioavailability, human obesity, and insulin resistance [41]. Further investigations are needed to assign acute and chronic effects to certain bioactive species in GTE and to specify the role of gut microbiota.

The current study also illustrated novel metabolic responses of GTE at rest and during exercise. GTE induced reductions in metabolites from the tryptophan pathway (tryptophan, serotonin and 5-HIAA) at

rest and in 3,4-dihydroxyphenylglycol (DOPEG), serotonin and NA during exercise. DOPEG is known to inhibit the enzyme monoamine oxidase (MAO) causing the oxidative deamination of NA, serotonin, and other amines. Inhibition of this enzyme would lead to increasing concentrations of NA and serotonin. Yet these two metabolites were reduced at the end of the exercise period suggesting a complex relationship between DOPEG, NA and serotonin as observed in plasma. This data provides evidence that GTE is capable of altering activity of certain catecholamines. However, the underlying mechanisms as well as their relation to physiological outcomes remain to be elucidated.

Finally, changes in certain TAG's and fatty acids were observed post-GTE- supplementation under resting and exercise conditions. This may suggest that GTE affects the response of exogenous and endogenous lipids. Manipulating lipids could be an interesting target for protecting against insulin resistance. Elevation in circulating lipids (DAG, TAG, FFA) has commonly been associated with impaired insulin-mediated glucose uptake [42,43] and elevated insulin resistance [44] usually coexisting with obesity and type 2 diabetes [45]. Exercise is one way of providing protection by having beneficial effects on glycaemic control [46] and by increasing utilisation of intramuscular lipids by reducing DAG and ceramides [47]. Recent evidence has shown that chronic GTE supplementation suppresses insulin resistance mainly in animal models [39,48] and improves insulin sensitivity in young physically active males [15]. However, the protective effects against insulin resistance with GTE in humans is currently not conclusive [49]. It is interesting to consider the possibility that GTE may provide additive protection against insulin resistance when combined with exercise, by increasing the turnover of intramuscular lipids rather than increasing storage of lipids associated with the metabolic syndrome.

In summary, our comprehensive metabolite profiling approach broadened our understanding on the mode of action of exercise and GTE beyond the physiological outcomes. Moderate intensity exercise stimulated multiple metabolic pathways including lipolysis, glycolysis, as well as the activation of the TCA cycle and the adrenergic system. The metabolite changes induced by GTE were more subtle and affected fewer pathways when compared to those induced by exercise alone. In agreement with

previous studies, we illustrated that 7-days GTE supplementation mainly enhanced metabolites indicative of lipolysis and fat oxidation under resting conditions, when compared to PLA. This effect was not enhanced during exercise. This suggests that a single dose of GTE may not be potent enough to stimulate further the metabolism that was already up-regulated by exercise. Furthermore, GTE did not stimulate the adrenergic system during rest and exercise since no increase in NA and related catecholamines were observed. This challenges COMT inhibition as the putative mechanism of action of GTE *in vivo*. Yet GTE stimulated lipolysis under resting conditions suggesting non-adrenergic mechanisms. It is clear, that the effects observed in plasma only provide limited information on the underlying mechanisms of action, since the metabolite concentrations in plasma reflect spill-over effects that may occur in several tissues including brain, skeletal muscle, liver, gut and adipose tissue. Further investigations are required to elucidate the potential targets, interactions and bioactivity of green tea catechins to understand the exact mechanisms of GTE and the physiological outcomes in the human body.

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## Chapter 3

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# The metabolic and performance effects of caffeine compared to coffee during endurance exercise

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Paper Published

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PLoS One. 2013;8(4):e59561

A.B.H Conceived and designed the experiment, performed the experiment, interpreted the data and wrote the manuscript, R.R Assisted in the data collection. A.J. Assisted with designing the experiment.

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### 3.1 Abstract

**Background:** There is consistent evidence supporting the ergogenic effects of caffeine for endurance based exercise. However, whether caffeine ingested through coffee has the same effects is still subject to debate. The primary aim of the study was to investigate the performance enhancing effects of caffeine and coffee using a time trial performance test, while also investigating the metabolic effects of caffeine and coffee. **Methods:** In a single-blind, crossover, randomised counter-balanced study design, eight trained male cyclists/triathletes (Mean  $\pm$  SD: Age  $41\pm 7$ y, Height  $1.80\pm 0.04$ m, Weight  $78.9\pm 4.1$ kg,  $\text{VO}_2$  max  $58\pm 3$  mL $\cdot$ kg $^{-1}\cdot$ min $^{-1}$ ) completed 30 min of steady-state (SS) cycling at approximately 55%  $\text{VO}_2$ max followed by a 45 min energy based target time trial (TT). One hour prior to exercise each athlete consumed drinks consisting of caffeine (5 mg/kg BM), instant coffee (5 mg/kg BM), instant decaffeinated coffee or placebo. The set workloads produced similar relative exercise intensities during the SS for all drinks, with no observed difference in carbohydrate or fat oxidation. **Results:** Performance times during the TT were significantly faster ( $\sim 5.0\%$ ) for both caffeine and coffee when compared to placebo and decaf ( $38.35\pm 1.53$ ,  $38.27\pm 1.80$ ,  $40.23\pm 1.98$ ,  $40.31\pm 1.22$  min respectively,  $p < 0.05$ ). The significantly faster performance times were similar for both caffeine and coffee. Average power for caffeine and coffee during the TT was significantly greater when compared to placebo and decaf ( $294\pm 21$ W,  $291\pm 22$ W,  $277\pm 14$ W,  $276\pm 23$ W respectively,  $p < 0.05$ ). No significant differences were observed between placebo and decaf during the TT. **Conclusions:** The present study illustrates that both caffeine (5 mg/kg BM) and coffee (5 mg/kg BM) consumed 1 h prior to exercise can improve endurance exercise performance.

### 3.2 Introduction

Numerous studies to date have shown that caffeine ingested prior to [1-7] and during [8] prolonged sub-maximal and high intensity exercise can improve performance. Since the seminal work by Costill and colleagues [9] it is often cited that caffeine induces its ergogenic effects by an increase in fat oxidation through the sympathetic nervous system, and a subsequent sparing of muscle glycogen [2]. However, there is very little support for an increase in fat oxidation [10,11] or an enhancement to the sympathetic nervous system [12] being the principal mechanism of caffeine's ergogenic effect. Since, recent investigations have elucidated that the principal mechanism of caffeine's ergogenic effects is through its ability to act as an adenosine receptor antagonist to induce effects on both central and peripheral nervous system [13] to reduce pain and exertion perception [14], improve motor recruitment [13] and excitation-contraction coupling [15-17].

In the literature to date, the ergogenic effects are well documented with the time to exhaustion test at a fixed power output being the predominant performance measure used [1,2,9-11]. It was questioned whether assessing endurance capacity in this way would have sufficient ecological validity to translate results to real life events [18]. However, since then a number of studies have confirmed the ergogenic effects of caffeine using time trial protocols [3-5,7,8], which involves completing an energy based target or set distance in as fast as time possible, thus simulating variable intensities that are likely to occur during competitive events. In most of these studies pure (anhydrous) caffeine was ingested through capsules or dissolved in water. Based on this research it is often assumed that ingesting caffeine in a variety of dietary sources, such as coffee, will result in the same ergogenic effect.

Very few studies, however, have shown a positive effect of coffee on exercise performance. Coffee improved performance in some [9,19-21], but not all studies [22-24]. This may seem surprising as reports have shown that coffee is the most concentrated dietary source of caffeine as well as being one of the largest sources of caffeine used by athletes prior to competition [25]. Amongst the current studies, only two investigations have actually used coffee rather than decaffeinated coffee plus

anhydrous caffeine [21,22], with only one of these studies showing an ergogenic effect of the coffee [21]. This further identifies the equivocal evidence surrounding the performance effects of coffee. The most cited study is perhaps a study by Graham et al [22], who showed that running time to exhaustion (85%  $\text{VO}_2$  max) was only improved when runners ingested pure caffeine (4.5mg/kg BM), prior to exercise, but not when they ingested either regular coffee (4.5mg/kg BM), decaffeinated coffee plus caffeine (4.5 mg/kg BM), decaffeinated coffee and a placebo control. The authors reported that the difference in performance could not be explained by the caffeine or methylxanthine plasma concentrations 1h following intake or at end of exercise, as no difference was observed between trials that contained caffeine.

Graham et al [22] suggested that other components in coffee known as chlorogenic acids, may have antagonised the physiological responses of caffeine. However, in this study [22] chlorogenic acids in the coffee or in the plasma were not measured. Chlorogenic acids are a group of phenolic compounds that possess a quinic acid ester of hydroxycinnamic acid [26]. The consumption of chlorogenic acids varies significantly in coffee ranging from 20-675mg per serving [26]. It has previously been shown *in vitro* that chlorogenic acids antagonize adenosine receptor binding of caffeine [27] and causes blunting to heart rate and blood pressure in rats [28]. For this reason, it is unclear what role chlorogenic acids, found in coffee, will have on the physiological and metabolic effects of coffee and caffeine during exercise in humans. Therefore, due to the large variation of chlorogenic acids between coffee beverages and the unclear performance effects of coffee to date, it is yet to be determined if coffee causes differences in the performance and metabolic effects during exercise when compared to caffeine alone.

Therefore, the primary aim of the present study was to investigate whether acute intake of instant coffee (5 mg/kg BM) and anhydrous caffeine (5 mg/kg BM) are ergogenic to cycling performance compared to decaffeinated coffee or placebo beverages when using a validated 45-minute time trial performance test.. In addition, completing a steady state exercise bout prior to the time trial performance test is a routine protocol used in our laboratory [18,29]. For this reason it provided an

opportunity to also investigate the effect of acute anhydrous caffeine or coffee intake on substrate oxidation and plasma metabolite responses during 30-min steady state exercise (55%  $\dot{V}O_2$  max). The study hypothesis was that despite the previous work by Graham et al [22], 5 mg/kg BM regardless of the form of administration (anhydrous or coffee) would be ergogenic to performance similarly when compared to decaffeinated coffee or placebo, but this effect would not be mediated through changes in fat metabolism.

### 3.3 Materials and Methods

#### 3.3.1 Participants

Eight trained cyclists/triathletes (Mean  $\pm$  SD: Age  $41 \pm 7$ y, Height  $1.80 \pm 0.04$ m, Weight  $78.9 \pm 4.1$ kg,  $\dot{V}O_2$  max  $58 \pm 3$  mL $\cdot$ kg $^{-1}$  $\cdot$ min $^{-1}$ ) were recruited from local Birmingham cycling and triathlon clubs. Inclusion criteria included participants who trained 3 or more times per week (>90-min/session), had been training for >2 years, and had a low habitual caffeine intake of  $\leq 300$ mg/d (approximately  $\leq 3$  cups coffee/d). All participants were fully informed of the experimental trials and all risks and discomforts associated before providing written informed consent to participate in the study. All procedures and protocols were approved by the Life and Environmental Sciences Ethical Review Committee at the University of Birmingham.

#### 3.3.2 General Study design

The study design was a cross over, randomised and single blinded. Maximal oxygen uptake ( $\dot{V}O_2$  max) and power (Wmax) was assessed during a preliminary trial. Following this each participant completed 4 experimental trials, each separated by 7 days. Each trial consisted of consuming: caffeine (5mg/kg BM) (CAF), instant coffee (5mg/kg BM) (COF), instant decaffeinated coffee (DECAF) or placebo (PLA, Quinine Sulphate) in the overnight fasted state (8hrs) 1 h before completing a 30 min steady state cycle exercise bout (SS) (55%  $\dot{V}O_2$  max). Following this each participant was instructed to

complete a time trial lasting approximately 45-min. Each participant returned to the lab 7 days later to repeat the trial, with a different supplement.

### 3.3.3 Preliminary Trial

Before the experimental trial, participants visited the Human Performance Laboratory at the University of Birmingham on two separate occasions separated by 7 days. During the first visit participants completed an incremental exercise test on an electronically braked cycle ergometer (Lode Excalibur Sport, Groningen, Netherlands) to volitional exhaustion ( $\dot{V}O_2$  max test). Prior to beginning the test participants firstly had weight (Ohaus, Champ II scales, USA) and height (Seca stadiometer, UK) recorded. Participants mounted the cycle ergometer, which was followed by a 5-min warm up at 75 W, participants then started the test at 95 W for 3-min. The resistance was increased every 3-min, in incremental steps of 35W, until they reached voluntary exhaustion.  $W_{max}$  was calculated using the following equation:

$$W_{max} = W_{out} + [(t/180) \times 35]$$

Where  $W_{out}$  is the power output of the last stage completed during the test, and t is the time spent, in seconds, in the final stage. Throughout the test respiratory gas measurements ( $\dot{V}O_2$  and  $\dot{V}CO_2$ ) were collected continuously using an Online Gas Analyser (Oxycon Pro, Jaeger).  $\dot{V}O_2$  was considered maximal if 2 out of the 4 following criteria were met: 1) if  $\dot{V}O_2$  levelled off even when workload increased 2) a respiratory exchange ratio (RER) of >1.05 3) a heart rate within 10 beats/min of age predicted maximal heart rate 4) a cadence of 50 rpm could not be maintained. Heart rate (HR) was recorded during each stage of the test using a HR monitor (Polar, Warwick, UK).  $W_{max}$  was used to determine the work load for the steady state exercise bouts throughout all subsequent experimental trials (50%  $W_{max}$ ).  $W_{max}$  was also used to calculate the total amount of work to be completed during the 45-min time trial and the linear factor, both calculated according to the formula derived by

Jeukendrup et al [18]. The bike position was recorded following the test to be replicated in all other trials.

Approximately 7 days later participants reported back to the lab, for the second preliminary trial, between 0600 and 0800 having undergone an 8 hr fast. The purpose of the trial was to familiarise each subject to the experimental trial and time trial protocol. All participants completed 30 min SS at 50%  $W_{\max}$  (55%  $\dot{V}O_2 \max$ ). Expired breath samples were collected every 10-min for measures of  $\dot{V}O_2$ ,  $\dot{V}CO_2$ , and RER (Oxycon Pro, Jaeger). Immediately following all participants completed a time trial lasting ~45 min. The data collected during the familiarisation trial was not used for any of the final analysis.

### 3.3.4 Experimental Trial

All participants reported to the Human Performance Lab between 0600 and 0800 having completed an 8 h overnight fast. On arrival weight was recorded (Seca Alpha, Hamburg, Germany) and a flexible 20-gauge Teflon catheter (Venflon; Becton Dickinson, Plymouth, United Kingdom) was inserted into an antecubital vein. A 3-way stopcock (Connecta; Becton Dickinson) was attached to the catheter to allow for repeated blood sampling during the experimental period. An initial 15 mL fasting blood sample was collected (EDTA-containing tubes, BD vacutainers). Following this all participants consumed one of the treatment beverages and rested for 1h, with further samples taken at 30 min and 60 min (10 mL EDTA). After the rest period, participants then mounted the cycle ergometer, in an identical bike position as recorded during the preliminary trial, and began a 30 min SS at 50%  $W_{\max}$  (55%  $\dot{V}O_2 \max$ ). Blood samples (15 mL) and 4 min respiratory breath samples,  $VO_2$ ,  $VCO_2$  and RER, (Oxycon Pro, Jaeger) were collected every 10 min during the exercise. The catheter was kept patent during both the rest and exercise period by flushing it with 5 mL isotonic saline (0.9% w/v; B Braun) after every blood sample. In addition, heart rate (HR) was recorded (Polar RS800CX) every 15 min at rest and every 10 min during SS. Ratings of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale were recorded every 10

min during SS using the 6-20 Borg scale [425]. Upon completion of the SS, the subject was instructed to stop exercising for ~1 min, and the cycle ergometer was set in the linear mode. The participants were instructed to complete an energy-based target amount of work at 70%  $W_{\max}$  in the quickest time possible. The total amount of work ( $650 \pm 37\text{KJ}$ ) was calculated for the 45 min time trial. A linear factor, 70%  $W_{\max}$  divided by  $(90\text{rpm})^2$  was entered into the cycle ergometer. Participants received a countdown prior to starting the time trial and received no verbal or visual feedback regarding performance time or physiological measures throughout the test. No additional measures, blood or respiratory, were taken through the test. Participants received no feedback about their performance until they had completed all 4 experimental trials. Following the completion of the TT, each participant completed a questionnaire to guess the test beverage consumed prior to the commencement of the trial, as well as report any GI distress experienced during the trial.

### 3.3.5 Treatment Beverages

During each visit to the lab, participants ingested one of four treatment beverages. This included caffeine (5 mg/kg BM), regular coffee (5 mg/kg BM), decaffeinated coffee and placebo. Therefore, decaffeinated coffee and placebo acted as controls to both of the caffeinated trials. Caffeine (Anhydrous caffeine, 99.8% pure, Blackburn Distributions Ltd, Nelson, United Kingdom) was weighed ( $394.4 \pm 7.0$  mg) prior to the trial, and was immediately dissolved and vortexed for 15 min in 600 mL of water prior to consumption and served in an opaque sports drinks bottle. Coffee was prepared using instant coffee (Nescafe Original). In order to select the correct weight of coffee to equal 5 mg/kg BM, Nescafe states that Nescafe Original instant coffee provides 3.4g caffeine/100 g of instant coffee. This information was confirmed using a HPLC method (see below), and based on the analysis it was calculated that 0.15 g coffee/kg BM equalled 5 mg/kg BM. Therefore, prior to each trial, coffee was weighed ( $11.8 \pm 1.0$  g) and dissolved in 600 mL hot water ( $94 \pm 2$  °C) and served in a mug. Both coffee and decaffeinated coffee were served hot, while caffeine and placebo were served cold.

DECAF (Nescafe Original Decaffeinated coffee, <97% caffeine free) was prepared in an identical fashion, with the same amount of decaffeinated coffee as the COF beverage. Using a HPLC method, decaffeinated coffee provided minimal caffeine throughout each of the prepared beverages (0.17 mg/kg BM or mean intake of  $13.41 \pm 0.70$  mg). In order to blind the participants from the taste of the caffeine trial, the placebo trial consisted of 8mg of Quinine sulphate (Sigma, UK). Quinine sulphate is a food ingredient found in tonic water to give a bitter taste. The quinine sulphate was dissolved in 600 mL of water, vortexed for 15 min, and served in an opaque sports drinks bottle. The exact dose of quinine sulphate was preliminary tested in our lab. A dose of 8 mg was sufficient to prevent the blinded researchers from distinguishing between the placebo and caffeine trial.

The coffee and decaffeinated coffee samples were further analysed externally for chlorogenic acids (5-CQA) (Eurofins Scientific, Italy). Based on the analysis, total 5-CQA was 33.91 mg/g and 28.29 mg/g for COF and DECAF respectively. This was then used to calculate the average concentration of total 5-CQA and related isomers for each participants drinks, based on the weight of instant COF and DECAF. The average chlorogenic acid intake in COF and DECAF are presented in Table 3.1.

All of the beverages were prepared in 600 mL of water. This was firstly to avoid any difference in uptake and bioavailability of each of the ingested ingredients, as well as replicating the format of coffee consumption from everyday life. Secondly 600 mL of coffee dissolved in water was not only considered tolerable, based on taste testing by researchers within our laboratory, but also matched similar volumes as used by Graham et al [216]. Once participants received each of the beverages at the beginning of the trial, they had 15 min to consume the entire 600 mL.

### **3.3.6 Diet and Exercise Control**

Participants were instructed to record their food intake the day prior to the preliminary familiarisation trial. Participants had to replicate this diet in the 24 h prior to each experimental trial, as well as refraining from any exercise, consume no alcohol and withdraw from any caffeinated products.

### 3.3.7 Calculations

Substrate metabolism was measured during the SS. From the respiratory output measurements of  $\dot{V}O_2$  and  $\dot{V}CO_2$  (L/min), carbohydrate [1] (CHO) and fat oxidation [2] was calculated every 10 min during the SS. In order to calculate CHO and fat oxidation stoichiometric equations [31] were used, which assume that each of the participants were exercising at a steady state and that protein oxidation was negligible

$$[1] \text{ Carbohydrate oxidation} = 4.210 \dot{V}CO_2 - 2.962 \dot{V}O_2$$

$$[2] \text{ Fat Oxidation} = 1.65 \dot{V}O_2 - 1.701 \dot{V}CO_2$$

### 3.3.8 Blood Analysis

Following collection, all tubes were placed in ice until the end of the experimental trial. Following this each tube was centrifuged at 3500 rpm for 15 min at 4°C. Aliquots of plasma were immediately frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C for later analysis. Each blood sample taken throughout each experimental trial were analysed for plasma glucose (Glucose Oxidase; Instrumentation Laboratories, England), fatty acids (FA) [NEFA-C; Randox, England], glycerol (Glycerol; Randox, England) and lactate [Lactate, Randox, England] using an ILAB 650 (Instrumentation Laboratory, Cheshire, United Kingdom).

### 3.3.9 Plasma Caffeine and Chlorogenic Acid analysis

Plasma caffeine were analysed externally (City Hospital, Dudley, Birmingham) using a reversed-HPLC-UV method. The sample preparation included: 200  $\mu$ L of plasma were added to 100  $\mu$ L internal standard (Proxyphylline, Sigma, United Kingdom) before mixing, heating and adding 500  $\mu$ L of acetic acid. The supernatant was the injected (5  $\mu$ L) onto a Phenomenex Prodigy 150 x 4.60mm 5  $\mu$  Octadecyl Silane (ODS) column using an auto sampler and detected at a UV of 273 nm.

**Table 3.1: Mean caffeine and chlorogenic acid (Total 5-QCA) concentration in each treatment beverage serving.**

Treatment beverage	Serving Volume (mL)	Caffeine content (mg/serving)	Total 5-CQA (mg/serving)	% of Total 5-CQA									
				CQA	5-CQA	4-QCA	5-FQA	4-FQA	3,5-diCQA	3,4-diCQA	4,5-diCQA	4,5-CFQA	
CAF	600	394.4±7.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COF	600	394.4±7.0	393.3±7.3	21%	32%	22%	8%	7%	3%	2%	3%	2%	
DECAF	600	13.4±0.2	328.1±6.1	23%	33%	24%	7%	7%	3%	1%	2%	1%	
PLA	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Means ± SE n=8 **Abbreviations:** **CQA** Caffeoylquinic acid, **5-QCA** 5-O-Caffeoylquinic acid, **4-QCA** 4-O-Caffeoylquinic acid, **5-FQA** 5-O-Feruloylquinic acid, **4-FQA** 4-O-Feruloylquinic acid, **3,5-diCQA** 3,5-O-Dicaffeoylquinic acid, **3,4-diCQA** 3,4-O-Dicaffeoylquinic acid, **4,5-diCQA** 4,5-O-Dicaffeoylquinic acid, **4,5-CFQA** 4,5-O-Dicaffeoylquinic acid

Caffeine concentrations were quantified using one point calibration from a calibrator that had previously been internally validated against a 9 point calibration curve (City Hospital, Dudley, Birmingham). With each batch two QC (High and Low) were run, with reference to the internal standard to account for any losses.

The caffeine content of coffee and decaffeinated coffee were confirmed at the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences. In brief, coffee and decaf coffee samples were prepared (identical to preparation described above) and cooled before 5 $\mu$ L of each sample were injected onto a Phenomenex Luna 10  $\mu$  C<sub>18</sub> (2) column using an auto sampler (WPS 3000, Dionex, United Kingdom). The mobile phase consisted of 0.1 M acetic acid in water and 0.1M acetic acid in acetonitrile. Caffeine concentrations were quantified using a 10-point caffeine calibration curve in water.

Coffee and Decaf coffee were analysed for chlorogenic acids. The analysis was conducted externally (Eurofins Scientific, Italy) using a reverse HPLC methodology at 325 nm (Water Symmetry C18, 250 x 4.6 mm, 5  $\mu$ m) with external 5-QCA standards for quantification on a 3 point calibration (10-250 mg/kg). The mobile phase consisted of aqueous 0.5 % formic acid and acetonitrile.

### **3.3.10 Statistical Analysis**

Data analysis was performed using SPSS for WINDOWS software (version 17; SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL). Data are expressed as means  $\pm$  SEMs, unless otherwise stated. A repeated measure ANOVA was used to assess differences in respiratory, substrate metabolism, plasma metabolite and caffeine concentration as well as time trial performance measurements during each trial. In order to detect differences across time and between treatments a Fisher protected least significant differences post hoc test was used. Significance was set at  $P < 0.05$ .

### 3.4 Results

#### 3.4.1 Steady State Exercise

##### 3.4.1.1 Whole body respiratory measures, HR and RPE.

The selected workload of 50%  $W_{max}$  during the SS ( $171 \pm 7W$ ) resulted in similar oxygen uptake ( $\dot{V}O_2$ ) ( $2590 \pm 79$ ,  $2595 \pm 89$ ,  $2465 \pm 79$ ,  $2522 \pm 71$  mL/min for CAF, COF, DECAF and PLA respectively  $P=0.278$ ). As a result the relative exercise intensity during the SS was similar throughout each trial ( $58 \pm 2\%$ ,  $58 \pm 2\%$ ,  $55 \pm 1\%$  and  $55 \pm 1\%$  for CAF, COF, DECAF and PLA respectively  $P=0.337$ ). Energy expended during SS was also shown to be similar ( $1607 \pm 49KJ$ ,  $1611 \pm 54KJ$ ,  $1531 \pm 50$  KJ,  $1565 \pm 43$ ) for CAF, COF, DECAF and PLA respectively  $P=0.248$ ). In addition no significant difference was observed in average HR during exercise ( $119 \pm 4$ ,  $119 \pm 4$ ,  $119 \pm 4$ ,  $120 \pm 5$  bpm for CAF, COF, DECAF and PLA respectively  $P=0.281$ ) or RPE values ( $10 \pm 0$ ,  $10 \pm 0$ ,  $11 \pm 0$  and  $11 \pm 0$  for CAF, COF, DECAF and PLA respectively  $P=0.091$ ) during SS between trials.

##### 3.4.1.2 Carbohydrate and Fat oxidation

Carbohydrate oxidation rates during SS significantly reduced in all treatments across time ( $P=0.001$ ). However, there was no significant difference in carbohydrate oxidation between each of the treatments (Figure 3.1A  $P=0.288$ ). Similarly, fat oxidation rates significantly increased during SS in all treatments ( $P=0.001$ ). No significant difference in fat oxidation was observed between each of the treatments (Figure 3.1B  $P=0.445$ ). Accordingly the contribution of carbohydrate and fat to total energy expenditure during SS was not significantly different between any of the treatments ( $P=0.463$ ).

##### 3.4.1.3 Plasma metabolite concentrations

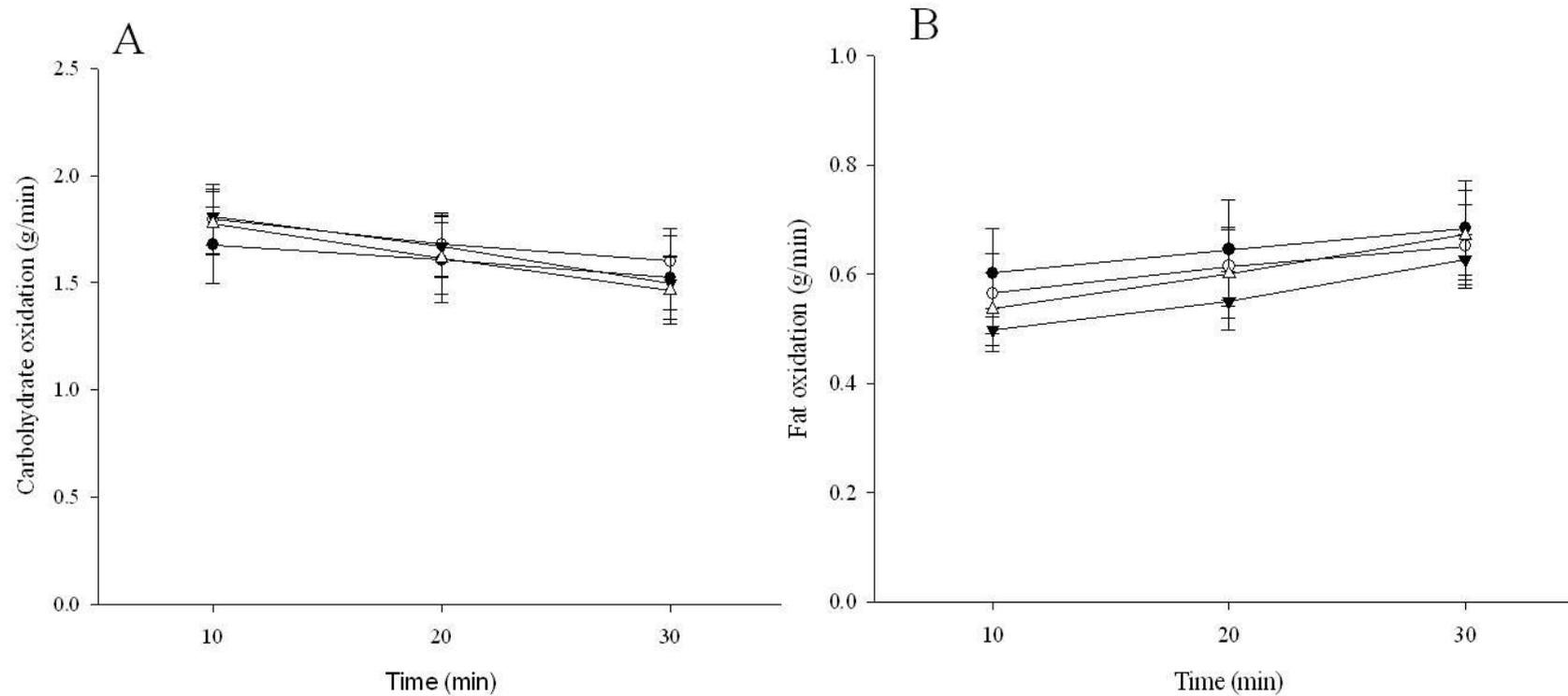
Plasma metabolite responses at rest and exercise are displayed in Figure 3.2 A-D. Plasma glucose concentrations (Figure 3.2A) were significantly elevated at the end of rest compared to the beginning of rest following CAF and COF ( $p < 0.05$  for both), while no significant difference occurred following DECAF or PLA ( $P=0.676$  and  $0.188$  respectively). The elevation in glucose concentrations with CAF

following the rest period was significantly higher compared to DECAF only ( $P < 0.05$ ). During exercise, plasma glucose increased over time following CAF and COF, however only COF reached statistical significance ( $P < 0.05$ ). DECAF and PLA glucose concentrations fell during the onset of exercise with a significant increase in both treatments later in exercise ( $T=10-30$   $P < 0.05$  for both). As a result, CAF had significantly higher glucose concentrations within the first 20 minutes of exercise compared to DECAF and PLA ( $P < 0.05$  for both), while at end of exercise CAF and COF had significantly higher glucose concentrations compared to PLA only ( $P < 0.05$  for both). Plasma FAs concentration (Figure 3.2B) were significantly elevated at the end of rest compared to beginning of rest following CAF ( $P=0.010$ ), while DECAF and PLA had reduced FA concentration, with only DECAF reaching statistical significance ( $P=0.007$  and  $P=0.072$  respectively). Therefore, CAF had significantly higher FAs concentration compared to DECAF and PLA at end of rest period ( $P < 0.05$  for both). During the beginning of exercise, CAF continued to have significantly elevated FAs concentration compared to DECAF only ( $P=0.037$ ). FA concentration significantly increased during exercise ( $T=10-30$   $P=0.030$ ) with no significant differences observed between treatments ( $P=0.231$ ).

Plasma glycerol concentrations (Figure 3.2C) did not significantly change at rest for CAF ( $P=0.066$ ), COF ( $P=0.392$ ) and DECAF ( $P=0.104$ ) but PLA significantly fell ( $P=0.022$ ). DECAF was significantly lower at end of rest compared to CAF, COF and PLA ( $P < 0.05$  for all), with no significant differences observed between any other beverage. During exercise there was a significant increase in glycerol concentrations for all treatments over time ( $P=0.001$ ), with significantly higher concentrations observed for CAF ( $P=0.027$ ) and COF ( $P=0.003$ ) at beginning of exercise compared to DECAF only.

Plasma lactate concentrations (Figure 3.2D), were significantly increased following the consumption of CAF and COF only during the rest period compared to DECAF ( $P=0.050$  and  $P=0.003$  respectively) and PLA ( $P=0.002$  and  $P=0.001$  respectively). In addition DECAF had significantly elevated lactate compared to PLA at end of rest period ( $P=0.012$ ).

**Figure 3.1: Carbohydrate oxidation (g/min) (A) and fat oxidation (g/min) (B) rates during 30 min steady state exercise (55% VO<sub>2</sub> max) 1 hour following ingestion of caffeine, coffee, decaf or placebo beverages**



Data represented seen as Closed circles – Caffeine Open circles – Caffeinated Coffee Closed triangles – Decaffeinated coffee Open triangles – Placebo.  
Means  $\pm$  SE n = 8

All treatments lactate concentrations significantly increased at the onset of exercise ( $P=0.004$ ) with CAF and COF being significantly higher compared to PLA ( $P=0.037$  and  $P=0.010$  respectively). CAF and COF had sustained lactate concentrations at the end of exercise, with significantly higher concentrations compared to DECAF ( $P=0.008$  and  $P=0.028$  respectively) and PLA ( $P=0.050$  and  $P=0.005$  respectively).

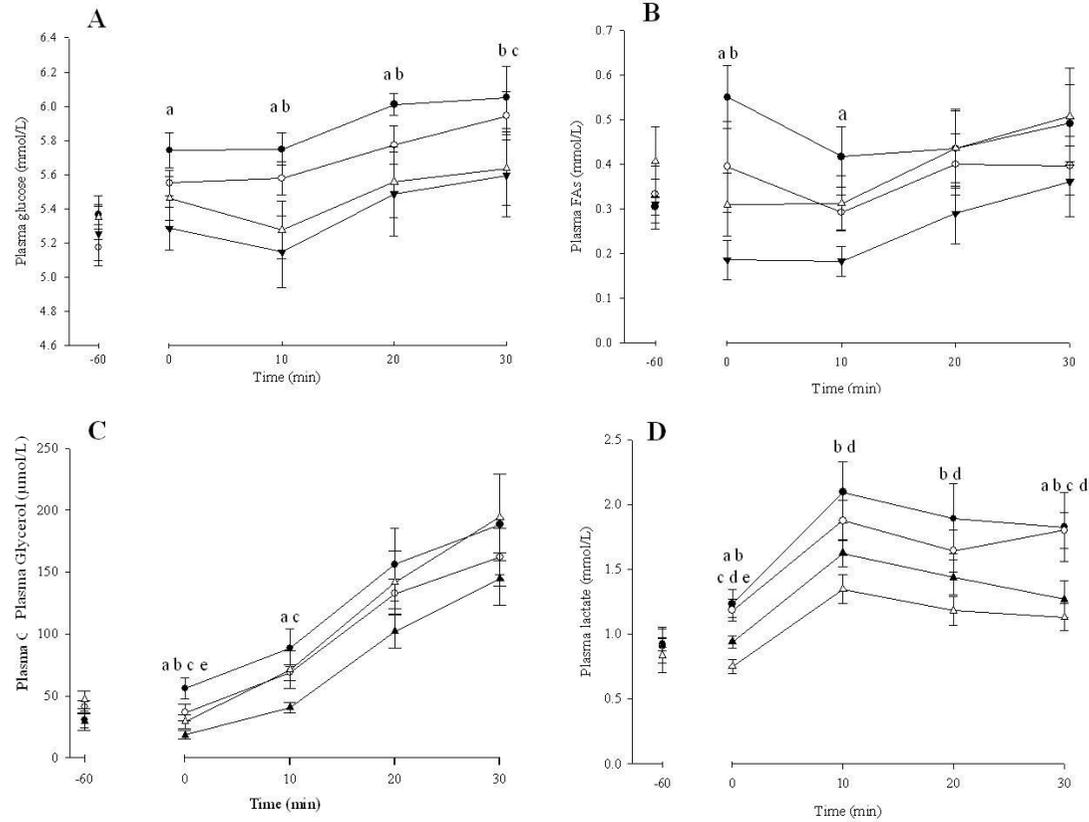
### 3.4.2 Plasma caffeine concentrations

The plasma caffeine concentrations following each beverage are displayed in Figure 3.3. At baseline plasma caffeine concentrations were very low for all treatments ( $<3 \mu\text{M}$ ), with no significant differences observed ( $P=0.478$ ). Plasma caffeine significantly increased following CAF and COF when compared to DECAF ( $P=0.000$  and  $P=0.009$  respectively) and PLA ( $P=0.000$  and  $P=0.010$  respectively), with peak concentrations observed 60 min after intake ( $38.2\pm 2.8 \mu\text{M}$  and  $33.5\pm 5.0 \mu\text{M}$  respectively). No significant difference was observed in the plasma caffeine concentrations between CAF or COF ( $P=0.156$ ) and DECAF or PLA ( $P=0.558$ ) throughout the trials

### 3.4.3 Time trial performance

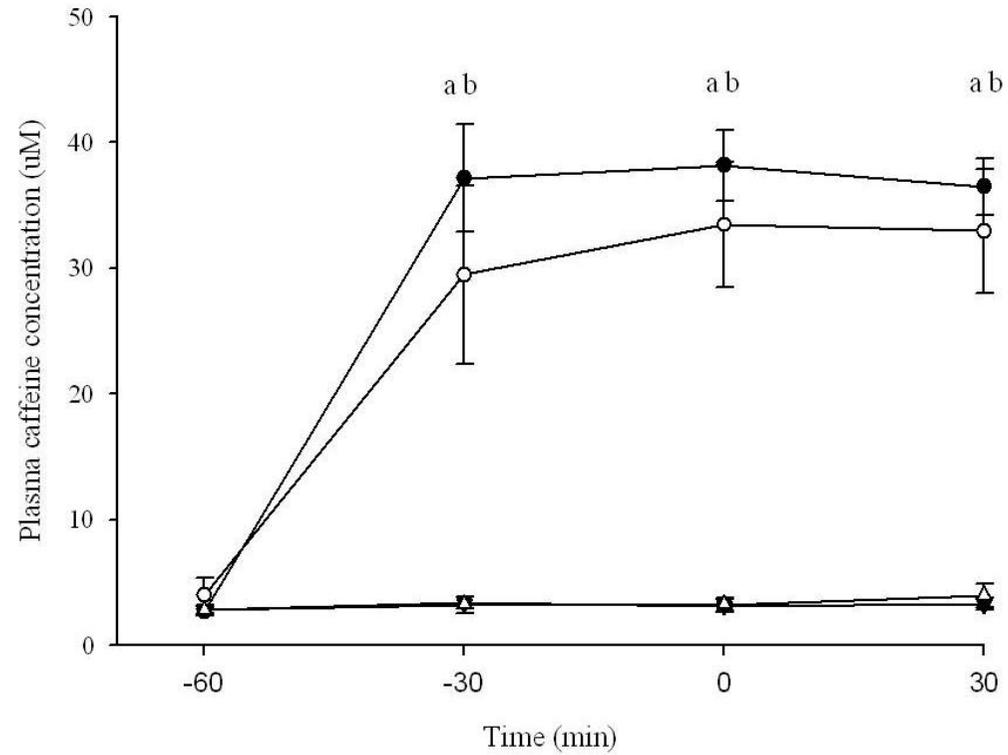
CAF and COF significantly improved TT finishing times when compared to both DECAF and PLA (Figure 3.4). As a result mean power output during the TT was significantly greater for both CAF and COF compared to DECAF and PLA ( $294\pm 6$ ,  $291\pm 7$ ,  $276\pm 7$ ,  $277\pm 4$  W, respectively). However, no significant differences were seen in average heart rate during the TT ( $170\pm 3$ ,  $167\pm 4$ ,  $164\pm 3$ ,  $165\pm 4$  BPM, respectively). CAF significantly improved TT performance by 4.9 % (95% confidence interval (CI) = 2.3-6.8 %) and 4.5 % (95% confidence interval (CI) = 2.3-6.2 %) compared to PLA and DECAF respectively ( $p<0.05$ ). Equally, COF significantly improved TT performance by 4.7% (95% confidence interval (CI) = 2.3-6.7 %) and 4.3 % (95 % confidence interval (CI) = 2.5-7.1 %) compared to PLA and DECAF respectively ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 3.2). In addition there were no significant differences in TT performance between CAF and COF or PLA and DECAF.

**Figure 3.2: Plasma metabolite responses at rest (t=-60-0) and during 30 min steady state exercise (55 % VO<sub>2</sub> max) (t=0-30) following ingestion of caffeine, coffee, decaf or placebo beverages.**



**A** Glucose. **B** Fatty acids (FA). **C** Glycerol. **D** Lactate. Data represented seen as Closed circles – Caffeine Open circles – Caffeinated Coffee Closed triangles – Decaffeinated coffee Open triangles – Placebo. a Sig. different between CAF and DECAF ( $p < 0.05$ ) b Sig. different between CAF and PLA ( $p < 0.05$ ) c Sig. different between COF and DECAF ( $p < 0.05$ ) d Sig. different between COF and PLA ( $p < 0.05$ ). Means  $\pm$  SE n = 7

**Figure 3.3: Plasma caffeine concentrations following ingestion of caffeine, coffee, decaf or placebo beverages.**



a CAF significantly different to DECAF and PLA ( $p < 0.001$ ) b COF significantly different to DECAF and PLA ( $p < 0.001$ ). Data represented seen as Closed circles – Caffeine Open circles – Caffeinated Coffee Closed triangles – Decaffeinated coffee Open triangles – Placebo Means  $\pm$  SE  $n = 7$ .

Following the completion of the TT, 3/8 participants were able to successfully guess the correct order of test beverages consumed prior to the trial. The correct guesses were more consistent for detecting CAF compared to the other drinks, with 6/8 of the participants guessing correctly. None of the participants reported any serious symptoms of GI distress at the end of any of the trials.

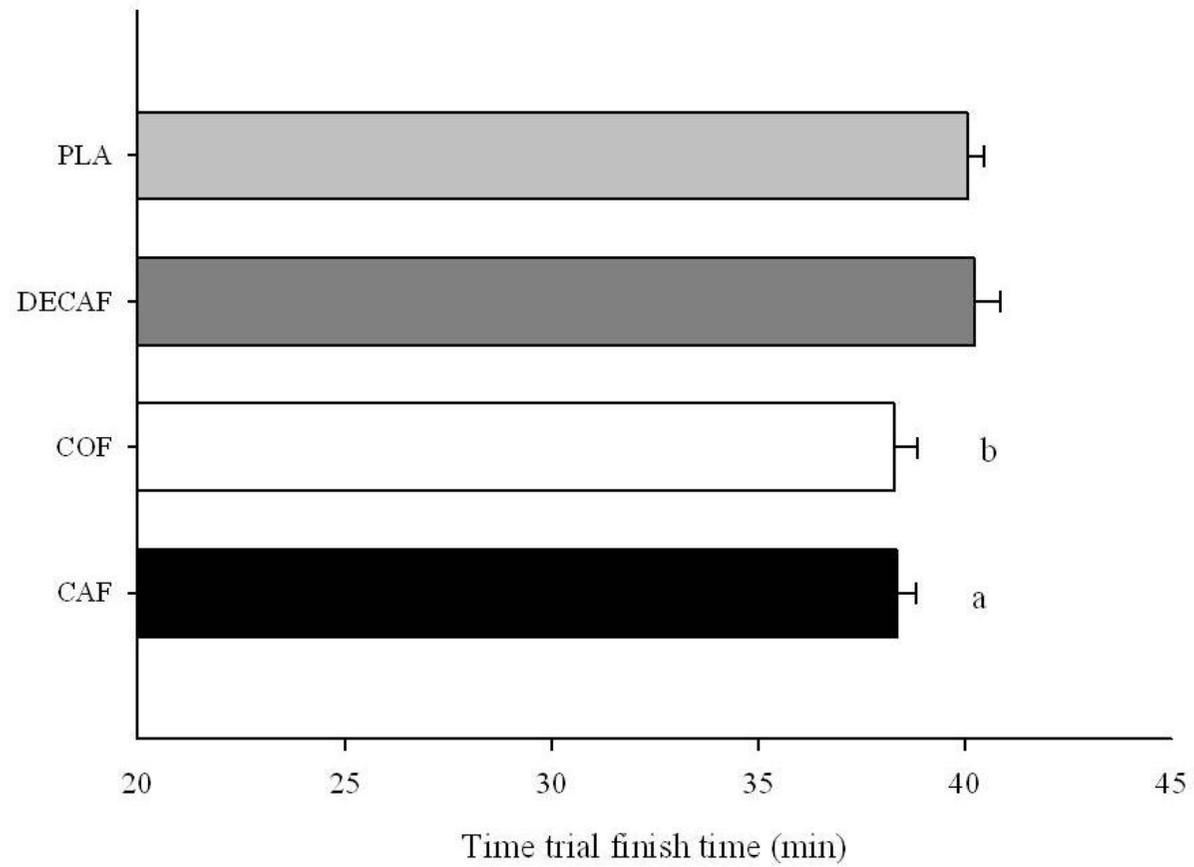
**Table 3.2: Time trial performance data for each treatment.** Means  $\pm$  SE n = 8 **a** significantly different to DECAF and PLA (p<0.05) **b** significantly different to DECAF and PLA (p<0.05)

Treatment	TT finish time (min)	Improvement compared to PLA % (95 % confidence intervals)	P value	Improvement compared to DECAF % (95 % confidence intervals)	P value
<b>CAF</b>	38.35 $\pm$ 0.48 <sup>a</sup>	4.9 (2.3-6.8)	0.001	4.5 (2.3-6.2)	0.002
<b>COF</b>	38.27 $\pm$ 0.57 <sup>b</sup>	4.7 (2.3-6.7)	0.002	4.3 (2.5-7.1)	0.002
<b>DECAF</b>	40.23 $\pm$ 0.63	-0.4 (-4.0-3.1)	0.784	-	-
<b>PLA</b>	40.06 $\pm$ 0.39	-	-	0.3(-0.3-3.9)	0.784

### 3.5 Discussion

The present study examined the effects of acute intake of coffee (5 mg/kg BM) and caffeine (5 mg/kg BM) on time trial cycling performance, as well as substrate utilisation during SS exercise. Numerous studies to date have shown the efficacy of acute caffeine ingestion for improving prolonged endurance exercise performance [1-7]. The effects of caffeine on time trial endurance performance (>5 min) have recently been reviewed in a well conducted meta-analysis [7]. The authors concluded that of the 12 studies that investigated caffeine intake (1-6 mg/kg BM), performance was improved by ~3%. Fewer studies have investigated the ergogenic effects of coffee, with results being mixed thus far. In agreement with the literature, the current study found an improvement in performance following caffeine intake of 4.9% and 4.5% when compared to decaf coffee and placebo, respectively (Table 3.2).

**Figure 3.4: Time trial finishing time (min) for caffeine, coffee, decaf or placebo beverages**



a CAF significantly different to DECAF and PLA ( $p < 0.05$ ) b COF significantly different to DECAF and PLA ( $p < 0.05$ ). Data represented seen as Closed bar– Caffeine Open bar – Caffeinated Coffee Dark grey bar– Decaffeinated coffee Light grey bar– Placebo. Means  $\pm$  SE n = 8.

Interestingly, the current study also showed that coffee improved performance to the same extent as caffeine when compared to decaf coffee and placebo, 4.7 % and 4.3 % respectively. Thus, this is the first study to date to demonstrate that coffee consumed 1 h prior to exercise, at a high caffeine dose (5 mg/kg BM), is equally as effective as caffeine at improving endurance exercise performance. Our findings are in line with a number of studies that have shown improvements to performance following coffee intake [9,19-21]. Costill et al [9] were the first to show that decaf coffee plus caffeine (330 mg), improved exercise time to exhaustion (80 %  $\text{VO}_2$  max) compared with decaffeinated coffee (~18 %). More recently, Wiles et al [19] showed that coffee was able to improve 1500 m treadmill running performance when compared to decaffeinated coffee (~3 %). However, the current study results are in contrast to a number of other studies [22-24]. For example, the work conducted by Graham et al [22] showed that coffee (4.5 mg/kg BM), regardless of the format of intake (regular coffee or decaffeinated coffee plus caffeine) did not result in an improvement to running time to exhaustion (75 %  $\text{VO}_2$  max), where as caffeine (4.5 mg/kg BM) significantly improved performance. Therefore, it was concluded by Graham et al [22] that the performance effects of coffee may be inferior to caffeine. Despite this evidence, the current study clearly demonstrates that coffee is as effective as caffeine at improving endurance exercise performance.

The discrepancy in the performance effects of caffeine and coffee between the present study and Graham et al [22] might be explained by the type of performance test implemented. Time to exhaustion tests have been shown to be highly variable from day to day, with a coefficient of variation (CV) ~27 % in one study [18]. It is possible that this large variability may have contributed to the lack of performance effects found by Graham et al [22]. Whereas using a time trial performance measure, as used in the current study, has previously been shown to be highly reproducible (CV ~ 3 %) and could detect smaller differences in performance [18]. Also the number of comparisons in the study by Graham et al [22] was greater than in the present study with a similar subject number, indicating that their statistical power was smaller. Perhaps for these reasons, the current study was able to detect

similar changes in performance following caffeine and coffee intake (~5 %) (Table 3.2), whereas Graham et al [22] did not.

The composition and preparation of coffee in each of the studies [9,19-24] may also explain the discrepancies in the ergogenic effects of coffee. Coffee is ~2% caffeine, with the remainder composed of chlorogenic acids, ferulic acid, caffeic acid, nicotinic acid as well as other unidentifiable compounds [26]. It is evident that the source of coffee beans, roasting, storage and preparation (brewing and filtering) dramatically alters the caffeine and chlorogenic acid content of the coffee [26]. In accordance, recent evidence has shown that the chlorogenic acid content of commercially available espresso coffees range from 24-422 mg/serving [26]. In support, the current study observes a high chlorogenic acid content in both coffee and decaffeinated coffee samples (Table 3.1). Graham et al [22] speculated that chlorogenic acids found in coffee may have blunted the physiological effects of caffeine, preventing an improvement in exercise performance. However, the authors did not report measurements of chlorogenic acids in coffee or in plasma to support this speculation. Despite the compounds present in coffee, the authors reported that the bioavailability of plasma caffeine and paraxanthines did not differ to caffeine [22], which is in line with the present study (Figure 3.4). Further, *in vitro* studies suggest that chlorogenic acids antagonize adenosine receptor binding of caffeine [27] and cause blunting to heart rate and blood pressure in rats [28]. Yet, *in vivo* there is no evidence to suggest that chlorogenic acids, especially at the low nanomolar concentration typically observed [32], impact on the mechanisms of action of caffeine that lead to the ergogenic effects. In support of this notion, and in agreement with the current study, regular coffee (1.1 mg/kg BM) consumed prior to the ingestion of different doses of caffeine (3-7 mg/kg BM) has been shown not to affect the ergogenic effects of caffeine [21].

The improvement in performance in the current study is unlikely to be explained by alterations to fat oxidation, as no difference during the SS exercise bout was observed (Figure 3.1B). This is in agreement with a number of investigations that do not support the thesis that caffeine improves exercise performance by augmenting fat metabolism [33,34]. In addition these effects are apparent

despite consistent increases in adrenaline through activation of the SNS [33,34] and a subsequent elevation in FA appearance in the circulation following caffeine intake [33,34]. It is evident that the improvement in performance is likely through caffeine's direct antagonism of adenosine receptors ( $A_1$  and  $A_{2A}$ ) on the skeletal muscle membrane to improve excitation-contraction coupling [13] via a greater release of  $Ca^{2+}$  from the SR [16] and/or improved  $Na^+/K^+$  ATPase pump activity [15]. In support of this notion, Mohr et al [12] observed that tetraplegic patients, who have an impaired sympathoadrenal response [35], showed that caffeine improved exercise performance, while RER did not change during an electrically stimulated cycling test. Further, the authors also observed a significant increase in FA and glycerol at rest and during exercise following caffeine intake, despite a lack of an adrenaline response. This is due to the fact that adenosine has been shown to inhibit lipolysis [36] and enhance insulin stimulated glucose uptake in contracting skeletal muscle *in vitro* [37]. In support, the current study observed a significant increase in plasma glucose, FA and glycerol concentrations following caffeine (Figure 3.2 A, B, C). In addition, the consistently reported elevation in adrenaline concentrations [33] combined with adenosine receptor antagonism following caffeine intake during exercise may work synergistically to activate glycogenolysis in exercising and non-exercising tissues [34] as well as adipose tissue/skeletal muscle lipolysis [33]. This supports the fact that the current study (Figure 3.2 D) and others have shown that caffeine increases plasma lactate concentrations at rest and during exercise [33,34]. Though to date there is little supporting evidence that caffeine stimulates exercising skeletal muscle glycogenolysis [33,38], with early studies showing a paradoxical glycogen sparing effect with caffeine [2]. The elevated lactate concentrations are more likely due to a reduced clearance by the exercising muscle and a greater release by non exercising tissues [33]. Consequently, due to the healthy participants tested in the current study it is likely that the adenosine receptor antagonism by caffeine plays a crucial role in inducing the ergogenic effects of caffeine while regulating the metabolite response synergistically with the SNS.

Interestingly, despite coffee producing similar ergogenic effects as caffeine, the metabolite responses were not identical (Figure 3.2). The current study observed that the significant increase in plasma

glucose, FA and glycerol with caffeine was paralleled with an attenuated response for coffee, and a significantly blunted response with decaf coffee when compared to placebo (Figure 3.2 A, B, C). This is likely due to the compounds in coffee [39] inducing subtle effects on antagonism of adenosine receptors ( $A_1$  and  $A_{2A}$ ) in a variety of exercising and non exercising tissues. In accordance, Graham et al [22] previously showed that coffee resulted in a blunted adrenaline response when compared to caffeine at rest in humans, which was attributed to chlorogenic acids antagonizing adenosine receptor binding of caffeine [27]. In addition nicotinic acid, a fatty acid ester found in coffee known to inhibit lipolysis, has been shown to lower FA concentrations in patients suffering from hyperlipidemia [40]. Chlorogenic acids are also believed to improve glucose uptake at the skeletal muscle when compared to caffeine [41], also by altering the antagonism of adenosine receptors. More recently, caffeic acid has been found to stimulate skeletal muscle glucose transport, independent of insulin, when accompanied with an elevation in AMPK *in vitro* [42]. Despite the aforementioned evidence, it remains unclear why compounds in coffee appear to modulate the metabolite response but not the ergogenic effects of coffee in the current study.

The current study provided a large bolus of caffeine in the form of anhydrous caffeine or coffee one hour prior to exercise (5 mg/kg BM). The chlorogenic acid content of the coffee beverages was different, which is worth highlighting as a potential limitation of the current study. Previous studies have failed to make comparisons between coffee and decaf coffee and instead have used decaf plus anhydrous caffeine [9,19-21,23,43]. In addition these studies did not examine the chlorogenic acid content of the test beverages. Thus, the novelty of the current study was that the performance effects were investigated between caffeine and coffee, independent of the combined effects of decaffeinated coffee plus caffeine. Adding a decaf plus caffeine trial would have been successful in controlling for chlorogenic acid content of the beverage. However, firstly, investigating the effect of chlorogenic acids on the metabolic and performance effects of caffeine was not the primary aim of the current study. Secondly, and more importantly, the low nanomolar concentration of chlorogenic acids *in vivo* [32] is unlikely to impact on the mechanisms of action of caffeine when compared to the physiological

effects observed *in vitro* from supra physiological concentrations of chlorogenic acids [27,28]. Yet, as differences in the metabolic effects of caffeine compared to coffee were observed in the current study, it may be important for future studies to control for chlorogenic acid content in coffee beverages or additionally increase the dose of chlorogenic acids to raise the bioavailability *in vivo*. In turn this will provide further insights into the metabolic differences between caffeine and coffee. In conclusion, the present study showed that caffeine and coffee (5 mg/kg BM) were both able to improve exercise performance to the same extent, when compared to both decaffeinated coffee and placebo. Our data does not support the notion that chlorogenic acids found in coffee impair the ergogenic effects of caffeine. However, the compounds found in coffee may alter the metabolic effects, as the current study observed differences between caffeine and coffee at rest and during exercise. It is yet to be determined if lower doses of caffeine, when ingested as coffee, offer the same ergogenic effects. This would offer a more applicable and realistic nutritional strategy for athletes.

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## Chapter 4

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# High prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency in university athletes living in the United Kingdom.

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Paper in submission

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European Journal of Sport Science

A.B.H Conceived and designed the experiment, performed the experiment, interpreted the data and wrote the manuscript, G.S and T.H Assisted in the data collection. S.A Assisted with designing the experiment.

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#### 4.1 Abstract

**Background:** The current study aims were threefold: 1) investigate vitamin D status in athletes living in the United Kingdom (52.4-52.5°N), 2) identify the potential sources and limitations of vitamin D status in athletes and 3) examine the effect vitamin D status may have on muscle function. **Methods:** Forty-eight indoor and outdoor athletes from a variety of sports were recruited during the winter. Vitamin D status (25(OH)D) was assessed from a single blood sample, followed by completion of a questionnaire pack that assessed sun exposure and vitamin D intake. In addition muscle function was assessed using a mechanography vertical jump and hand grip maximum voluntary contraction. **Results:** Mean 25(OH)D was  $51 \pm 24$  nmol/L with 10%, 44%, 29% and 17% of athletes being severely vitamin D deficient (<25 nmol/L), deficient (<50 nmol/L), insufficient (50-75 nmol/L) and sufficient (>75 nmol/L), respectively. No significant differences in 25(OH)D were observed between gender or indoor and outdoor athletes. No correlation was found between 25(OH)D and time spent outdoors during training or leisure time, while a positive association was found between 25(OH)D and vitamin D supplement intake ( $r=0.353$   $p<0.005$ ) but not dietary intake. Further, vitamin D status had no association with muscle function performance. **Conclusions:** The current study illustrates a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in UK athletes during the winter. Reported seasonal sun exposure and dietary vitamin D intake had little effect on winter vitamin D status. Future work should explore the efficacy of vitamin D supplements as an effective nutritional intervention to correct vitamin D deficiency during the winter.

## 4.2 Introduction

Vitamin D is a secosteroid traditionally involved in optimal bone health which is obtained through endogenous cutaneous synthesis from ultraviolet radiation (UVB) as well as from dietary sources (oily fish, eggs, butter and fortified foods) [1]. Vitamin D is also critical in the maintenance of optimal skeletal muscle function, whereby myopathy [2] and neuromuscular impairments [3] are prominent features in children and adults with severe vitamin D deficiency (clinical measure of vitamin D, 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D) < 25nmol/L). The role of vitamin D in the skeletal muscle is confirmed by the vitamin D receptor (VDR) being abundantly expressed in the skeletal muscle [4], allowing the active form of vitamin D (1,25(OH)<sub>2</sub>D<sub>3</sub>) to regulate over 1000 vitamin D responsive human genes [5].

Alarmingly, accumulating evidence has shown a high prevalence of worldwide vitamin D deficiency [6] especially at high latitudes, such as in the United Kingdom (UK) [7]. This suggests that the deleterious effects of vitamin D deficiency on skeletal muscle function are possibly prominent in our population today. In support of this notion, numerous studies to date have shown that vitamin D deficiency (< 50 nmol/L) in elderly men and women are associated with a greater risk of falls [8], development of fatigue [9], and reduced skeletal muscle strength [10]. In addition, skeletal muscle strength and function has also been shown to be negatively associated with vitamin D status in healthy adolescent girls [11]. Moreover, vitamin D supplementation has shown promise as a nutritional support in the correction of vitamin D deficiency [12] and the observed impairment to skeletal muscle function in the elderly.

A growing number of studies have begun to assess the vitamin D status in athletes worldwide. Collectively these studies show a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in athletes worldwide [13-17]. Hamilton et al 2010 reported that athletes who live and train in Qatar had a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (~90%) despite the sunny environment and low latitude. Close et al [14] has recently shown that outdoor athletes from a variety of sports residing from Liverpool, UK (53.4°N) display a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (~60%). However, to date a complete understanding

of the extent of the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in UK athletes remains unclear. Despite this, these findings are of great concern and relevance for optimal athletic performance.

The factors that compromise vitamin D intake include poor dietary sources as well as factors that limit endogenous cutaneous synthesis from the sun. These include: poor UVB at high latitudes and in cloudy climates, dark skin pigmentation, use of sun lotion, clothing, time of day, and time spent outdoors [1]. For these reasons, the high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in athletes is likely explained by those who live and train indoors as well as at high latitudes and poor climates, as observed in the UK (50-60°N) [18]. Yet while athletes have been shown to consume sufficient quantities of many micronutrients (based on reference nutrient intake (RNI)), it appears that athletes consume vitamin D well below the RNI (200 IU/d in the UK, 5 µg/d) [19]. This would suggest that athletes may benefit from vitamin D supplementation to avoid deficiency. However, the estimation of vitamin D intake (sun, food and supplements) in athletes is largely unknown.

Interestingly, despite the importance of vitamin D in the human body, the categorisation of an optimal 25(OH)D concentrations remains under continued debate. The recent Institute of Medicine (IOM) report states that inadequate vitamin D status is defined at 25(OH)D <50 nmol/L [20], while the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) in the UK define vitamin D deficiency as 25(OH)D <25 nmol/L [21]. These guidelines are solely based on the benefits of vitamin D on bone health [22]. However, they have received a great deal of criticism, with other experts defining sufficient vitamin D status as >75 nmol/L [23] which include the benefits to skeletal muscle function and not just bone health. In contrast, the Endocrinology Society [24] state that vitamin D status is deficient, insufficient and sufficient when 25(OH)D concentrations are <50 nmol/L, 50-75 nmol/L and > 75 nmol/L respectively. In support, benefits to skeletal muscle strength and performance in the elderly have been observed at 25(OH)D concentrations >100 nmol/L [25] whereas in athletes benefits to exercise performance have recently been observed when 25(OH)D was increased >75 nmol/L (range 75-139 nmol/L) following vitamin D supplementation [14]. Currently, the majority of evidence

has been documented in the elderly with an optimal vitamin D status required to elicit benefits to skeletal muscle function still being unknown.

Hence, the aim of the current study was three fold. Firstly, to assess whether or not a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in university UK athletes, at the current test site (high latitude 52.4-52.5°N) during the winter (December-March), was comparable to the current trends in athletes to date. In an attempt to account for the differing vitamin D status guidelines, the current study categorised severe vitamin D deficiency, deficiency, insufficiency and sufficiency as serum total 25(OH)D of <25 nmol/L, <50 nmol/L, 50-75 nmol/L and >75 nmol/L, respectively. Secondly, the study also aimed to estimate vitamin D intake (sun, food and supplements) and assess the contribution of intake to vitamin D status. Finally the current study aimed to provide preliminary insight into the association between 25(OH)D and skeletal muscle function in a small number of athletes, when using basic assessments of skeletal muscle function.

## **4.3 Method**

### **4.3.1 Study Participants**

Fifty male and female athletes (Mean  $\pm$  SD, age:  $25 \pm 8$  y, height:  $1.75 \pm 0.08$  m, weight:  $73.8 \pm 13.6$  kg, body mass index (BMI)  $27.3 \pm 3.8$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>) were recruited from the University of Birmingham, Birmingham in the UK (52.4-52.5°N) between December and March. To be eligible to participate, participants were required to have trained in a specific sport for at least 2 years and train at least twice per week, for 60-90 minutes per session. The study was approved by the University of Birmingham's Science, technology engineering and mathematics ethical review committee.

### **4.3.2 Experimental trial**

#### **4.3.2.1 Vitamin D status**

Participants arrived at the laboratory following a 3 h fast between 0800 and 1600 where height (Seca stadiometer, UK) and weight (Ohaus, Champ II scales, USA) were recorded. A resting venous blood

sample (Venisystem Butterfly, NU Care, UK) was taken from each participant, which was immediately placed into silica-polymer gel tubes (Vacutainer, BD, USA) and left at room temperature for 1 h to clot. Samples were then centrifuged at 3500rpm and 4°C for 15 min, before serum was extracted and stored at -80°C. Serum total 25(OH)D was later analysed using a 25-OH vit D enzymeimmunoassay (Immunodiagnostik Systems) which measures both 25(OH)D<sub>2</sub> and 25(OH)D<sub>3</sub> together. The intra and inter assay coefficient of variation (%CV) was 4.7 %CV and 8.4 %CV across a working range of 6.8-380 nmol/L. This assay has been shown to be comparable to other methodologies as approved by the Vitamin D External Quality Assessment Scheme (DEQAS [www.deqas.org](http://www.deqas.org)) [26].

Following this, each participant completed a questionnaire pack which estimated sources and limitations of vitamin D. Sun exposure was estimated by asking each participant whether they were an indoor or outdoor athlete as well as estimating sun exposure by the amount of time they spent outdoors in each season across the previous year for training/competing and in leisure time (h/wk). This was estimated from the frequency (d/wk), duration (<30 min, 1 h, 1-3 h, 3-5 h or > 5 h) and time of day (early morning, mid morning, lunchtime, afternoon or evening) spent outdoors for each season.

Dietary vitamin D intake was estimated using an adapted food frequency questionnaire [27]. A list of common vitamin D rich foods found in the UK diet and other less common foods were listed. Participants were asked to state how often they consumed each of the foods as 100g servings, unless otherwise stated for more conventional serving sizes for juices, milks and spreads (never or <1 /month, 1-3 /month, 1 /wk, 2-4 /wk, 5-6 /wk, 1 /d and 2-3 /d, 4-5 /d or >6 /d). The vitamin D concentration of each food was gathered from the McCance and Widdowson's Composition of Foods Integrated dataset (CoF IDS) from the Department of Health [28]. Vitamin D content in each food item, multiplied by the median of the frequency selected, provided an estimation of the vitamin D content consumed per day (IU/d). Vitamin D supplement use was estimated by the frequency of intake of multivitamins and/or vitamin D only supplements (never or <1 /month, 1-3 /month, 1 /wk, 2-4 /wk, 5-6 /wk, 1 /d and 2-3 /d, 4-5 /d or >6 /d). Participants were asked to provide the brand and product details for the

multivitamin and vitamin D supplement. The dose of vitamin D intake from the supplement was multiplied by the median of the frequency of use to give an estimation of intake (IU/d).

#### **4.3.2.2 Skeletal muscle function tests**

Two skeletal muscle function performance tests were completed. Vertical jump height and force was assessed for each participant on a multi-component force platform (Kistler, 9281CA, Winterthur, Switzerland) with integrated Bioware software (Kistler, version 3.2.6, Winterthur, Switzerland). Participants were instructed to perform a total of three maximal countermovement jumps with hands on hips. Between each repeat each participant rested for 60 seconds. Jump height was calculated by taking the velocity of each jump (calculated using the flight time method [29]) squared and dividing it by gravitational forces [29]. Jump force was measured by the integrated force platform in Newtons (N), which was normalised for weight. The maximal jump height of the three attempts was used for analysis.

In addition participants completed a hand grip maximal voluntary contraction (MVC). In brief, a bespoke dynamometer integrated with a computer system (Spike version 2.0, Cambridge Electronic Design Ltd., Cambridge, UK) measured MVC in Newtons (N). Participants performed four maximal contractions (MVC) each followed by 60s rest. MVC was classified as the largest of the four repeated contractions. The protocol was repeated for both the dominant and non-dominant hand.

#### **4.3.3 Statistical Analysis**

Data analysis was performed using SPSS for WINDOWS software (version 17; SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL). All data is expressed as Mean  $\pm$  SD, unless stated otherwise. Prior to statistical analysis all data was tested for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Data that deviated from normality was log transformed. In order to detect differences in serum 25(OH)D, hours spent outdoors training/competing and during leisure time, dietary and supplement vitamin D intake between groups a one way ANOVA was used. A Bonferroni post hoc test was used to correct for multiple comparisons. Pearson correlations assessed associations between serum 25(OH)D and body weight, BMI, vitamin D

intake and performance data. All Pearson correlations were controlled for by body weight and sex. Whereas Spearman correlations assessed associations between serum 25(OH)D and specific vitamin D rich foods, vitamin D supplement intake, training time outdoors and tanning bed use. Significance was set at  $P < 0.05$ .

## 4.4 Results

### 4.4.1 Participant characteristics

Fifty participants were recruited to take part in the study, with two participants choosing to withdraw from the study with no specific reason. Forty eight participants (45 Caucasian and 3 Indian) were therefore tested, of which 28 were men (Mean  $\pm$  SD, age:  $26 \pm 10$  y, height:  $1.79 \pm 0.06$  m, weight:  $80.2 \pm 11.7$  kg, body mass index (BMI)  $27.7 \pm 3.4$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>) and 20 were women (Mean  $\pm$  SD, age:  $22 \pm 4$  y, height:  $1.69 \pm 0.06$  m, weight:  $64.8 \pm 10.8$  kg, body mass index (BMI)  $26.6 \pm 4.3$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>). The participants performed in a variety of sports (Table 4.1). Based on these sports, twenty one of the participants were classed as indoor athletes, and twenty seven were classed as outdoor athletes.

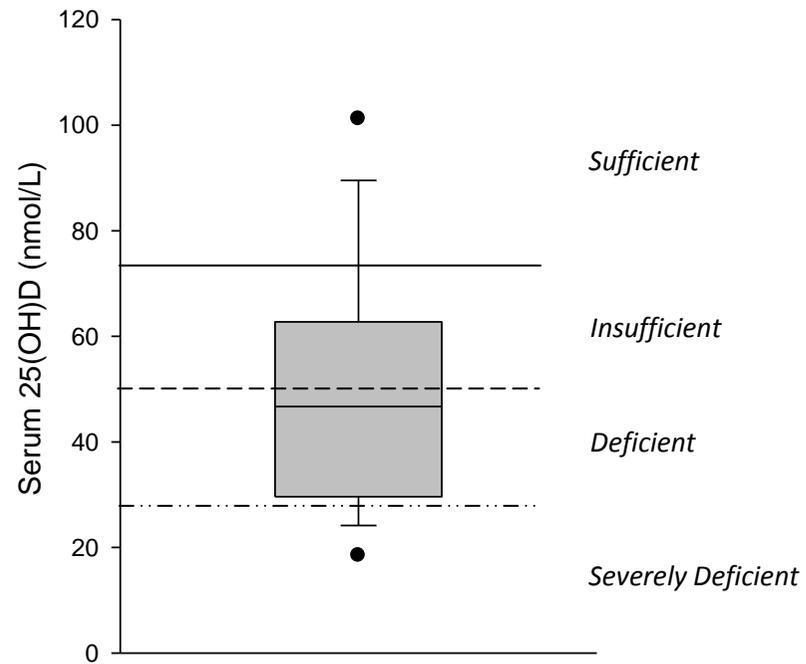
**Table 4.1: List of sports included in the study (I, Indoor, O, Outdoor)**

Sport	Number of athletes
Football (O)	2
Rugby (O)	5
Field Hockey (O)	2
Netball (I)	1
Badminton (I)	2
Basketball (I)	3
Gymnastics (I)	2
Weight lifters (I)	10
Athletics (O)	2
Triathlon (O)	9
Cricket (O)	1
Squash (I)	1
Running (O)	4
Volleyball (I)	1
Dancing (I)	2
Golf (O)	1

#### 4.4.2 Vitamin D status

Mean serum total 25(OH)D was  $51 \pm 24$  nmol/L (range 18 - 112 nmol/L) with 10% (5/48), 44% (21/48), 29% (14/48) and 17% (8/48) of athletes being severely vitamin D deficient (<25 nmol/L), deficient (<50 nmol/L), insufficient (50-75 nmol/L) and sufficient (>75 nmol/L), respectively. Moreover, only 4% (2/48) of the athletes tested had 25(OH)D >100nmol/L. (Figure 4.1). No significant differences were observed between men and women ( $P=0.089$ ) or indoor and outdoor ( $P=0.339$ ) athletes despite total serum 25(OH)D appearing higher for women and outdoor sports (Table 4.2). Men had a higher prevalence of vitamin D deficiency than women, especially at 25(OH)D concentrations that are categorised as severely vitamin D deficient (<25nmol/L). On the other hand women had a higher prevalence of insufficiency than men. Further, the prevalence of deficiency, insufficiency and sufficiency were similar between indoor and outdoor athletes (Table 4.2).

**Figure 4.1: Winter serum 25(OH)D concentrations from a variety of indoor and outdoor athletes living and training at high latitude in the United Kingdom. (Mean±SD)**



Circles above and below the box plot represent outliers (below and above the 5<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> percentile, respectively).

#### 4.4.3 Sun exposure during training and leisure time

Outdoor athletes reported spending significantly more time outdoors training/competing in all seasons compared to indoor athletes ( $p < 0.001$ ) (Figure 4.2). However, no differences were found between men and women in any season. The majority of participants reported training/competing outdoors early in the morning during the autumn (47%) and winter (50%), whereas during the spring (41%) and summer (47%) the majority of participants trained outdoors at lunchtime/early afternoon. Time spent training/competing outdoors did not correlate with serum 25(OH)D in autumn ( $r = 0.061$   $P = 0.686$ ), spring ( $r = 0.128$   $P = 0.391$ ) or summer ( $r = -0.027$   $P = 0.856$ ). However, time spent training/competing outdoors in winter positively correlated with serum 25(OH)D ( $r = 0.344$   $p = 0.017$ ).

**Table 4.2: Mean serum total 25(OH)D (nmol/L) for each group and prevalence (% within each group) of each vitamin D status group. Mean  $\pm$  SD.**

Group	Serum Total25(OH)D (nmol/L)	Prevalence of each vitamin D status group			
		Severely deficient (<25nmol/L)	Deficient (<50nmol/L)	Insufficient (50-75nmol/L)	Sufficient (>75nmol/L)
Men (n=28)	47 $\pm$ 23	18%	50%	18%	14%
Women (n=20)	58 $\pm$ 24	0%	35%	45%	20%
Indoor (n=21)	48 $\pm$ 24	9%	48%	29%	14%
Outdoor (n=27)	55 $\pm$ 24	10%	41%	30%	19%

In addition participants reported spending  $3.4 \pm 2.5$  h/wk,  $3.2 \pm 2.6$  h/wk,  $5.0 \pm 2.7$  h/wk and  $6.1 \pm 2.3$  h/wk outdoors during leisure time in the autumn, winter, spring and summer respectively. No correlations were found between serum 25(OH)D and leisure time spent outdoors in autumn ( $r = 0.107$   $P = 0.475$ ), winter ( $r = -0.105$   $P = 0.484$ ), spring ( $r = -0.152$   $P = 0.308$ ) and summer ( $r = -0.104$   $P = 0.489$ ).

#### 4.4.4 Other sources and limitations to sun exposure

No participant reported ever using sun beds. In total, 42% of participants reported using sun lotion in the summer, with only 4% reporting using sun lotion in the spring. The average sun protection factor

(SPF) used by participants was  $18 \pm 9$  (range 5-50) with no correlation between the SPF and serum 25(OH)D ( $r=0.080$   $p=0.598$ ). Only 17% of participants reported wearing no shirt outdoors in the summer. For each season, the total amount of clothes worn was calculated by adding the responses to each individual piece of clothing. No significant differences were observed for total clothes worn in each season when comparing between indoor and outdoor athletes, or men and women.

#### **4.4.5 Vitamin D intake**

Total vitamin D intake (diet and supplements) was estimated at  $317 \pm 647$  IU/d (max: 3040 IU/d). Only 11/48 (23%) participants consumed vitamin D greater than prescribed reference nutrient intake (RNI) [30]. Total vitamin D intake was positively correlated with serum 25(OH)D but failed to reach significance ( $r=0.275$   $P=0.064$ ). Dietary vitamin D intake was estimated to be  $106 \pm 131$  IU/d (max: 633 IU/d). However, only 3/48 (6%) of the participants actually met the RNI. No correlation was found between dietary vitamin D intake and serum 25(OH)D ( $r=0.081$   $P=0.594$ ).

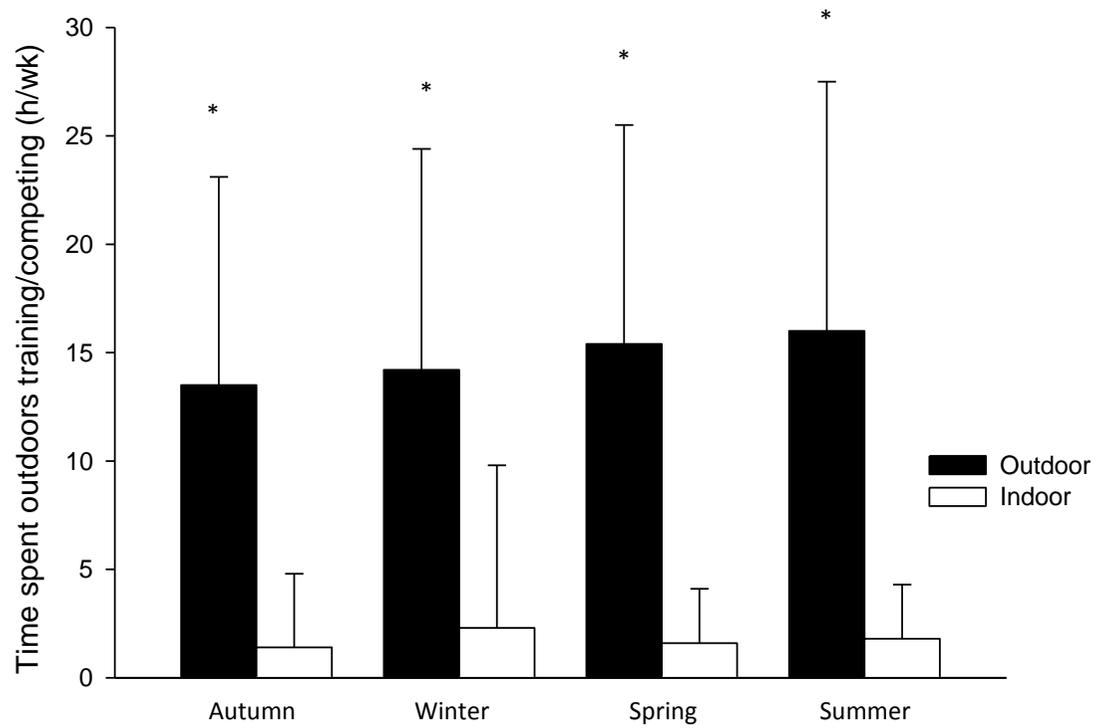
Vitamin D supplements were used by 2/48 (4%) participants, while 10/48 (21%) participants consumed a multivitamin containing vitamin D. The average vitamin D supplement (including multivitamin supplements) was  $694 \pm 1008$  IU/d (max: 3000IU/d), with only 3 participants consuming a supplement that was above 400 IU/d, of which all were men. Vitamin D supplement dose was positively correlated with serum 25(OH)D ( $r=0.353$   $P<0.005$ ).

##### **4.4.5.1 Muscle function performance tests and vitamin D status**

No significant correlation was observed between jump force ( $r= 0.048$   $P=0.755$ ), jump height ( $r= -0.275$   $P=0.071$ ), dominant hand grip ( $r= -0.088$   $P=0.570$ ) or dominant hand grip force ( $r= 0.12$   $P=0.939$ ) and serum 25(OH)D.

**Figure 4.2: Seasonal differences in estimation of time spent outdoors (h/wk) training/competing for indoor and outdoor athletes**

(Mean±SD) \* Significantly different to indoor athletes (P<0.05).



#### 4.5 Discussion

The current study demonstrates a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency during the winter in UK athletes, with 10% (5/48) 44% (21/48) and 29% (14/48) of the athletes tested being severely vitamin D deficient, deficient and insufficient, respectively. These findings are in line with previous studies conducted in athletes, at both high [13-15, 17] and low latitudes [16]. Morton et al 2012 reported that 65% of elite football players were vitamin D deficient ( $< 50$  nmol/L) during the winter in the UK ( $53^{\circ}$ N). More recently, the same research group recruited 61 outdoor athletes from a variety of sports who were living and training at high latitude ( $53^{\circ}$ N). It was reported that during the winter, 64% of a variety of outdoor athletes were vitamin D deficient [14]. Similar findings have also been found in athletes living and training at higher latitudes to the current study test site ( $60.5^{\circ}$ N) [17]. Hence this data firstly brings to light the potential negative implications to athletic performance, considering that vitamin D deficiency is closely associated with sub-optimal skeletal muscle function and structure [2, 9, 10]. Secondly the data also highlights the opportunity for continued research into the physiological consequences of vitamin D deficiency at the current test site.

The high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency observed in the current study is not surprising. This is because during the winter, at high latitudes, cutaneous vitamin D synthesis reaches nadir [1]. In addition the high cloud cover that the UK experiences most of the year also limits cutaneous vitamin D synthesis [31]. These factors are also likely to explain why no significant differences were observed between indoor and outdoor athletes vitamin D status (Table 4.2), which is in agreement with others [27]. This was evident despite outdoor athletes reporting spending more time outdoors training/competing during the summer and spring when compared to indoor athletes (Figure 4.2). Yet the current study is unable to comment on the vitamin D status of the participants during the other seasons. However, [32] calculated that in California, summer sun exposure had to be high (90 min/d) followed by vitamin D supplementation of 1300IU/d during the winter to sustain sufficient vitamin D status across the year. Consequently, in order for UK athletes to sustain vitamin D

sufficiency it may be that sun exposure should be encouraged during the summer in combination with vitamin D supplementation.

In contrast to this suggestion, the current study illustrates that very few participants reported spending time outdoors with no top on (17%) during the summer with a high proportion of athletes frequently using sun lotion in the summer. Collectively these factors are known to impair cutaneous synthesis of vitamin D [1]. As little as 30 minutes in the midday sun wearing minimal clothing (to achieve a whole body minimal erythemal dose) has been shown to be equivalent to 10,000IU of vitamin D which will raise 25(OH)D considerably [1]. However, the current recommendations for sun exposure and sun protection are undefined in the UK [30]. This is mainly due to the difficulty of accurately measuring sun exposure, the incomplete knowledge of the sun's contribution to vitamin D status and the risk of developing skin cancer [21]. Collectively, the poor climate of the UK combined with the low reported time spent outdoors during the summer would suggest that athletes require a greater dietary intake of vitamin D to sustain sufficient vitamin D status.

The estimated vitamin D intake in the current study ( $106 \pm 131$  IU/d) was below the RNI (400IU) for the UK [30]. These estimations are in agreement with previous investigations in UK adults [7] and in athletes worldwide [17, 27]. However, it is argued that dietary vitamin D intake at the current RNI is inadequate to sustain a sufficient vitamin D status when in the absence of sunlight [1]. Despite this, these are the current recommendations for vitamin D intake in the UK [30]. In support, recent evidence from UK and Ireland (50-60°N) has shown that 400 IU/d of dietary vitamin D was only able to sustain 25(OH)D at 25 nmol/L across the year [7] and unable to maintain summer 25(OH)D during the winter [33]. Hall et al [32] also showed that during low sun exposure in the Californian summer (~20 min/d) it was estimated that an additional 1000IU/d was required to sustain sufficient vitamin D status. More strikingly, during the winter the authors calculated that 2550IU/d was required to sustain sufficient vitamin D status. Considering that sun exposure is severely reduced in the UK during the summer when compared to California, combining this data with the current study findings clearly

suggests that higher doses (1000-2500IU/d) of dietary vitamin D are essential to achieve vitamin D sufficiency.

Increasing vitamin D intake in the diet is often difficult from food sources alone. Vitamin D supplements have been shown to be effective tools to improve the vitamin D content in the diet while also raising vitamin D status. However, the current study shows that very few athletes (25%) reported using a supplement containing vitamin D. Others have also shown a poor use of vitamin D supplements amongst athletes [19], even though athletes frequently use an array of dietary supplements [34]. Furthermore, the estimated vitamin D supplement intake in the current study was correlated with 25(OH)D ( $r=0.353$   $P<0.005$ ) supporting the use of high doses of vitamin D supplements to increase vitamin D status. However, the current guidelines for vitamin D supplement use is unclear and currently under debate [20, 24]. It is generally well accepted that in order to raise 25(OH)D to sufficient concentrations, doses above the RNI in the UK and RDA (600IU/d) in the United States doses are required (1000-4000IU/d) [23, 24]. In support, Close et al [13, 14] has recently demonstrated in two separate studies that daily vitamin D intake at 5000IU/d for 8 weeks [14] or larger weekly doses (20,000IU and 40,000IU) for 8 weeks [13] are both highly effective at improving vitamin D status to sufficient concentrations. Taken together vitamin D supplements would be an effective nutritional strategy for UK athletes to ensure vitamin D sufficiency can be achieved during the winter. Yet to date the optimal vitamin D supplementation protocol (dose, duration, and frequency) has not been established. Therefore, future dose response intervention studies are required to elucidate this further.

It is important to highlight that the current studies estimations for vitamin D intake, from both sun exposure and dietary vitamin D intake, are not without its limitations. The current study implemented food frequency questionnaire based quantification of vitamin D intake. This was primarily due to the ease of gaining an insight into the dietary habits of the athletes tested. The authors however acknowledge that using this approach may result in an underestimation of vitamin D intake due to athletes under reported serving sizes, frequency and dose of supplement use or the declared use of

fortified foods. Future studies should aim to use more accurate measurements of vitamin D intake through the use of diet diaries, diet recalls and UV dosimeters.

Despite vitamin D deficiency being shown in the elderly to have deleterious effects on skeletal muscle function and structures [2, 9, 10], the current study showed that vitamin D status was not significantly associated with skeletal muscle function (vertical jump and hand grip MVC). This data suggests that vitamin D status may not be important in determining skeletal muscle function in athletes. In contention, Ward et al [11] showed that in young adolescent girls vitamin D status was positively correlated with jump height, velocity, power and force. Recently, Close et al [14] showed that soccer players significantly improved 10 m sprint times and vertical jump following 8 weeks of 5000IU/d during the winter in the UK (53°N) when compared to placebo. The improvements in performance were observed when vitamin D status was improved to sufficiency. However, these findings have not been replicated by the same research group [13]. Therefore, it remains unclear what role vitamin D has on skeletal muscle function in athletes and thus requires further investigation.

The lack of association between vitamin D status and muscle function in the current study may be due to the small number of participants as well as the heterogeneous group tested. Previous associative studies have observed small to medium effect sizes ( $r = 0.22-0.32$ ) for the association between 25(OH)D and skeletal muscle function and performance in larger sample sizes (99- >300 participants). It is also important to point out that in trained athletes skeletal muscle function and structure may be superior when compared to untrained adults, adolescents and the elderly. Thus, it may be speculated that the effect of vitamin D may have smaller effects in athletes when compared to those previously researched groups. Consequently, in order to effectively address the current research question large sample sizes (>300) may be necessary to pick up the small effect sizes potentially observed in athletes.

In summary, we have demonstrated that the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency is high in a variety of indoor and outdoor athletes living in the UK during the winter. In addition we observed that athletes from the UK had a low estimated dietary intake of vitamin D, well below the

current RNI. However, the significant positive correlation between vitamin D supplement intake and 25(OH)D support the use of vitamin D supplements as an effective strategy to improve vitamin D status in athletes. Yet, it remains unclear whether improving vitamin D status in athletes has any beneficial effects on performance or other determinants of performance (immunity, illness, recovery). Therefore, further investigations using vitamin D supplements are required to test the currently speculative benefits of vitamin D in athletes.

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## **Chapter 6**

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### **General Discussion**

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This thesis investigated three commonly used nutritional interventions and supports by athletes that are often cited to optimise fat metabolism during exercise and improve endurance exercise performance. These interventions and supports included green tea, coffee and vitamin D.

**More specifically the purpose of this thesis was four fold:**

- 1. To describe the metabolic effects of green tea at rest and during moderate intensity exercise.**
- 2. To compare the metabolic and performance effects of caffeine and coffee during endurance exercise.**
- 3. To provide insight into the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in athletes and the potential impact on exercise performance.**
- 4. To determine the influence of vitamin D supplementation on improving vitamin D status and exercise performance in athletes.**

### **6.1 Part A. Green Tea and Caffeine**

**Chapter 2** examined the metabolic effects of green tea extract (GTE) on human metabolism at rest and during moderate intensity exercise. These effects were assessed in plasma using a metabolomics approach, which can be used to systematically assess patterns and changes in plasma metabolites following exercise and dietary interventions. This approach allowed a comprehensive unbiased and systemic investigation into the diverse metabolic responses of GTE. This is the first study to directly compare the metabolic responses to GTE supplementation at rest and during moderate intensity exercise. GTE resulted in different metabolic effects during rest and exercise when compared to placebo: At rest GTE induced metabolite changes indicative of enhanced lipolysis (increase in glycerol, reduction in TAGs, increased fat oxidation (increase in 3-hydroxybutyrate), and activated TCA cycle (increase in citrate). These metabolic changes suggest that GTE has the potential to augment fat metabolism at rest, potentially by increasing lipolysis, which is in agreement with studies

that have shown increases in whole body fat oxidation at rest in humans [1-4]. However, previous studies have also shown no change in fat oxidation at rest following GTE in humans [5-8]. During exercise, GTE caused metabolite changes that were associated with enhanced glycolysis (increase in pyruvate, lactate) and decreased fat oxidation (reduction in 3-hydroxybutyrate). These findings were somewhat unexpected as previous evidence has demonstrated that short [9] and long term [10, 11] GTE intake increases fat oxidation during exercise in humans. Although the reasons for these differential effects remain unclear, these data suggest that GTE has little effect on fat metabolism during exercise, which may limit its use as a nutritional support in that occasion. This is further supported by the fact that whole body fat oxidation was not altered in the same study following 7 days GTE, which has been reported in a separate manuscript [12].

It is often cited in the literature that the short term metabolic effects of GTE are induced through a stimulatory effect on the SNS through the enzyme catechol-*O*-methyltransferase (COMT) [13]. COMT is a constitutively active enzyme, ubiquitous throughout all mammalian tissues including skeletal muscle and adipose tissue [14]. EGCG has been reported to directly inhibit catechol-*O*-methyltransferase (COMT) [15]. Herein, it is believed that circulatory catecholamine concentrations will be greater thus stimulating lipolysis via adrenergic receptors and potentially increasing fat oxidation [16]. However, the evidence to support the COMT mechanism is limited to a small number of *in vitro* studies [15, 17]. In order to investigate this mechanism *in vivo*, **Chapter 2** used a targeted metabolomics approach to assess catecholamine response, specifically including adrenaline and noradrenaline. Not surprisingly, **Chapter 2** showed that moderate intensity exercise alone induced significant changes of 14 metabolites involved in the catecholamine metabolism. However, in **Chapter 2** we found no change in plasma catecholamines at rest or during moderate intensity exercise for GTE compared to PLA.

Therefore, the metabolic effects that were observed at rest and during exercise in **Chapter 2** appear to be independent of any significant changes in catecholamine concentration. As a result, this questions the efficacy of the widely referenced COMT mechanism to explain changes in substrate metabolism in

humans. **Chapter 2** is supported by a small number of investigations that shows no change in plasma catecholamines following GTE when compared to PLA [5-7]. Thus, the mechanisms to describe the increase in fat oxidation at rest and during exercise following short term GTE intake remain unclear. Previous investigations in animals have shown that the improvements to fat oxidation following GTE maybe explained by increases in mRNA expression of specific fat metabolism enzymes. But this data is purely limited to longer term GTE intake [18-20]. On the other hand, Murase et al [21] has recently reported that treatment of rat L6 myoblasts with EGCG transiently increased AMPK and ACC activity. Both of these enzymes in the skeletal muscle have been proposed to acutely regulate fat metabolism [22]. The authors also showed that the increase in AMPK activity was due to the activation of the upstream kinase LKB1. The increase in AMPK and ACC was also confirmed following the acute feeding of EGCG (200 mg/kg BM) to mice, which was paralleled with an increase in fat oxidation at rest. However, while these research findings show promise in explaining the previously reported increase in fat oxidation following short term GTE intake [1, 9] they are currently limited due to the lack of supporting human evidence. Therefore, future research is required to elucidate the mechanisms of short term GTE intake on fat oxidation, potentially focusing on the role of AMPK, LKB1 and other fat metabolism regulating signalling molecules

Alternatively, caffeine, ingested mainly at high doses (>5 mg/kg BM) has previously been shown to consistently cause an increase in catecholamines at rest and during exercise [23-26] which has also increases plasma FA and glycerol concentrations [26-28]. Therefore, the presence of caffeine in GTE may be responsible for augmenting the SNS and stimulating lipolysis. But regardless of the presence of caffeine in the GTE drink in **Chapter 2**, no difference in plasma catecholamine response was observed. This is likely explained by the lower dose of caffeine (120 mg) ingested in **Chapter 2** compared to previous caffeine studies [5-7]. Further, despite the increase in the SNS and lipolysis following moderate to high caffeine intake (>5 mg/kg BM) very few have observed an increase in fat oxidation [29-32]. This is supported by the findings in **Chapter 3**, whereby caffeine (5 mg/kg BM) consumed 1 hour prior to exercise caused a significant increase in plasma fatty acid and glycerol

concentrations at rest, but did not cause any difference in whole body fat oxidation when compared to coffee, placebo or decaf coffee. Collectively this evidence suggests that the metabolic significance of increasing catecholamines at rest and during exercise with GTE and/or caffeine is unclear. In support, previous evidence has shown that increasing circulating adrenaline concentrations (within a physiological range), through infusions, has not led to an increase in fat oxidation, despite an increase in lipolysis [33]. Furthermore, increasing the availability of FA during exercise following GTE and caffeine, as observed in **Chapter 2 and 3**, also suggests a lack of metabolic significance for increasing fat oxidation. Previous studies have shown that plasma FA oxidation is the predominant fat source oxidised during low to moderate intensity exercise, with a concomitant reduction at higher exercise intensities [34, 35]. However, increasing the availability of FA through intralipid plus heparin infusions during exercise under high glycolytic conditions, such as high intensity exercise or carbohydrate feeding, partly rescues the blunted fat oxidation rates [36, 37]. However, it would appear that the magnitude of plasma FA concentration change is crucial in order to augment fat oxidation. The magnitude of FA change with GTE and caffeine, shown in **Chapter 2 and 3** and other previous caffeine [26, 38] and GTE [1, 9, 12], may not be large enough to cause significant changes in fat oxidation. In addition, **Chapter 2 and 3** studied the effects of GTE and Caffeine, respectively, during moderate intensity exercise which has previously been shown not to limit FA availability or oxidation [34, 35]. Therefore, increasing fat oxidation during exercise may only be apparent when FA availability and oxidation is limited, such as at high exercise intensities (>75 % VO<sub>2</sub> max) [36] or in individuals who have impaired metabolic flexibility [39], as seen in obesity and non-insulin – dependent diabetes mellitus.

The metabolic effects of GTE, with caffeine, during exercise has been rarely studied [9]. When the findings of **Chapter 2 and 3** are taken together, the increase in lactate observed, may suggest the presence of caffeine in GTE could possibly alter the metabolic response during exercise when compared to GTE alone. These findings are in contrast to previous hypotheses that state the GTE and caffeine may have a synergistic effect [13]. The duration of GTE intake may also be a significant

factor in determining not only the effects on fat metabolism but also the mechanisms of action (as previously discussed). In **Chapter 2**, the metabolic effects observed during exercise can largely be attributed to the acute (single dose) post-GTE-supplementation, while the effects at rest are due to chronic (7 days) GTE supplementation. Firstly, the different metabolic effects induced at rest and during exercise in the current thesis may have been explained by the chronic and acute feeding of GTE, respectively. Secondly, considering that longer term GTE intake in human [40-43] and in animals [20] has shown promise at increasing fat oxidation, it remains to be determined whether longer term intake is more effective than shorter term intake at altering fat metabolism. Therefore, future research is required to examine the longer term effects of GTE supplementation on whole body fat metabolism at rest and during exercise. In addition, evidence in animal studies have shown that longer term GTE intake, when combined with endurance exercise training, results in superior adaptations to fat metabolism when compared to exercise alone [18, 19, 44]. Considering the well documented evidence to show that endurance exercise training is highly effective at augmenting fat oxidation and improving endurance exercise capacity [45-48], future research should include the effects of GTE on skeletal muscle adaptations at rest and following endurance exercise training in humans. In turn this may provide evidence for the use of GTE as a nutritional support to endurance exercise training as well as improve our understanding of the mechanisms of actions to describe the metabolic effects of GTE.

In **Chapter 3**, the ergogenic effects of coffee compared to caffeine were examined. It had been suggested that caffeine resulted in increases in exercise capacity but coffee (including caffeine) did not [49]. **Chapter 3** offers new evidence to support the use of coffee as nutritional support for endurance athletes. Coffee (5mg/kg BM) consumed 1 hour prior to exercise was equally as effective at improving endurance exercise performance when compared to caffeine (5mg/kg BM). Prior to the presented work, only two studies have used both caffeine and coffee combinations within the same study [49, 50], with contradicting results regarding the ergogenic effect of coffee. Graham et al [49] found that anhydrous caffeine (4.5 mg/kg BM consumed as a capsule) significantly improved running time to

exhaustion when compared to placebo (consumed as a capsule) and decaf coffee (consumed as a beverage). However, coffee (4.5 mg/kg BM consumed as a beverage) did not result in a significant improvement to running time to exhaustion when compared to placebo or decaf coffee. On the other hand, McLellan et al [50] reported that consuming coffee (1.1mg/kg BM) prior to the ingestion of different doses of caffeine (3-7mg/kg BM) did not affect the ergogenic effects of caffeine when using a time to exhaustion test. The discrepancies in findings may be explained by the mode of delivery of caffeine, coffee, decaf and placebo or maybe explained by the performance tests selected in each study. In both of the aforementioned studies a time to exhaustion test was used. However, it has been questioned whether assessing performance using a time to exhaustion test is reliable or has sufficient ecological validity [51]. With this in mind, **Chapter 3** follows a well designed and controlled study by only using beverages as the format of caffeine administration, using a double placebo control (decaf coffee and placebo) and using a highly validated time trial protocol.

In contrast to the similar performance effects of caffeine and coffee in **Chapter 3**, differences in the metabolite responses at rest and during exercise were observed between the beverages. However, these differing metabolite responses did not alter fat oxidation during exercise. This firstly demonstrates that the performance benefits of caffeine, either delivered as anhydrous caffeine or coffee, is not explained by changes to fat oxidation. During the steady state exercise bout, caffeine caused a significant increase in plasma glucose, FA and glycerol whereas coffee had a small non-significant attenuated response to each metabolite. Further, decaf coffee resulted in a lower plasma FA and glycerol concentration when compared to placebo. The mechanisms to describe the varying metabolite responses following each beverage are difficult to explain. Previous evidence has shown an increase in plasma FA and glycerol concentrations in spinal cord injured individuals, who have an impaired sympathoadrenal response, following caffeine intake [52]. The metabolite response induced by caffeine was independent of adrenaline and explained by the antagonism of adenosine receptors on adipose tissue or skeletal muscle. This is because adenosine has been shown to inhibit lipolysis [53] and enhance insulin stimulated glucose uptake in contracting skeletal muscle *in vitro* [54]. Therefore,

it is likely that compounds in coffee may induce subtle effects on antagonism of adenosine receptors ( $A_1$  and  $A_{2A}$ ) in a variety of tissues [55]. This is partly supported by the findings of Graham et al [49] who showed that coffee lead to a blunted adrenaline concentration following coffee intake when compared to caffeine. These conclusions are limited due to the lack of research. However, while the differing metabolic effects of caffeine and coffee do not alter the ergogenic effects, they may have implications on health outcomes [55]. Therefore, future research is required to understand the metabolic effects of compounds found in coffee and the significance they have on health outcomes.

## 6.2 Future research questions – Green tea and caffeine:

Following on from **Chapter 2 and 3**, a number of key questions still remain to be answered:

1. Does longer term (> 7 days) GTE supplementation augment fat metabolism at rest and during exercise when compared to shorter term (< 7 days) GTE supplementation?
2. Can GTE supplementation provide additive adaptations to fat metabolism when combined with endurance exercise training in humans?
3. What are the mechanisms to describe the metabolic effects of longer term GTE supplementation within the skeletal muscle in humans?
4. Which of the green tea catechins are bioactive in humans following short and long term GTE supplementation?
5. What is the metabolic effect of GTE at rest and during exercise in individuals who have an impaired ability to oxidise fat?
6. Can coffee be used as a nutritional support to improve endurance exercise performance at lower doses (1-3 mg/kg BM)?
7. What are the physiological and metabolic effects of compounds found in coffee *in vivo*?

## 6.3 Part B: Vitamin D

Vitamin D has been discussed extensively to date in relation to bone health [56]. However, it also has an important role on optimal skeletal muscle function, structure and composition, particularly in the

elderly skeletal muscle [57]. This evidence in the elderly could suggest that vitamin D may have an important role in determining exercise performance [58]. This is alarming when considering the high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency that is observed worldwide today [59]. Taking together the importance of vitamin D in elderly skeletal muscle combined with the high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in our population could translate into negative impacts on exercise performance in healthy skeletal muscle. These deleterious effects of vitamin D deficiency to skeletal muscle function would be highly important to athletes. Yet despite this, little is known about the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in athletes or the impact it may have on exercise performance.

Currently, the definition of categorising vitamin D status is complicated due to multiple recommendations currently available in the literature which are based on varying health outcomes. This thesis defines vitamin D status as severe deficiency, deficiency, insufficiency and sufficiency corresponding to 25(OH)D concentrations of <25 nmol/L, <50 nmol/L, 50-75 nmol/L and >75 nmol/L, respectively. These cut offs for vitamin D status are in unison with the majority of guidelines to date [60, 61]. **Chapters 4 and 5** assessed vitamin D status in athletes living at high latitude during the winter, both of which are known to impede upon cutaneous vitamin D synthesis [62]. **Chapter 4** showed that 44% (21/48) and 29% (14/48) of university athletes from a variety of indoor and outdoor sports were vitamin D deficient and insufficient, respectively. Similarly **Chapter 5**, found that 53% (19/36) and 33% (12/36) of endurance trained cyclists were also vitamin D deficient and insufficient, respectively. The extent of deficiency and insufficiency reported in these studies is in line with recent evidence in athletes living and training at slightly higher latitude in the UK (53°N), whereby 64% of a variety of outdoor athletes [63] and 65% of elite football players were vitamin D deficient (<50 nmol/L) [64]. Moreover, in the results presented in **Chapter 4** even outdoor athletes had high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency, despite athletes retrospectively reporting that they spent large amounts of time outdoors training/competing during the summer and spring where cutaneous synthesis of vitamin D is high [65]. This was also true of the endurance cyclists in **Chapter 5**, who all trained/competed outdoors regularly. These findings are in keeping with evidence from

outdoor athletes both at high [66-69] and low [63, 64, 70, 71] latitudes. However, despite the similar trends in vitamin D status between the current thesis work and others, it is difficult to compare between studies due to the different methods used to quantify vitamin D status [72]. The differences between methods include the ability to extract 25(OH)D from the sample, the traceability and the accuracy of the assay. Previous studies have shown a lack of correlation between commercially available vitamin D assays [73] which are likely attributed to the lack of a standardised reference material. The thesis took these methodological issues into account by using a commercially available kit in **Chapter 4** that has been shown to be highly comparable to other methodologies as approved by the Vitamin D External Quality Assessment Scheme (DEQAS [www.deqas.org](http://www.deqas.org) [73]). Furthermore, in an attempt to further improve the accuracy of measuring vitamin D status in athletes, **Chapter 5** used liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS). Recent reports have shown that LC-MS/MS produces more accurate and sensitive measurements of 25(OH)D when compared to immunoassay methods [72]. With these methodological justifications in mind, the data in **Chapter 4 and 5** clearly demonstrate that vitamin D deficiency is highly prevalent in both indoor and outdoor athletes living and training in the UK during the winter.

The data presented in **Chapter 4 and 5** also highlighted the importance of dietary vitamin D intake. Both studies observed that UK athlete's vitamin D intake was below the current RNI ( $106 \pm 131$  IU/d and  $116 \pm 162$  IU/d), which supports previous evidence in athletes [63, 67] but also in UK adults [74]. Studies have shown that in order to prevent vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency, far higher doses of vitamin D above the RNI (400IU) are required in the diet [75]. These recommendations are evident in the strong correlation observed in **Chapter 4** between vitamin D supplement intake, which would increase dietary vitamin D intake, and 25(OH)D concentrations. In further support, **Chapter 5** demonstrated the efficacy of short term (28 days) vitamin D supplementation at high doses in improving vitamin D status to sufficient concentrations. This was achieved by using 1500IU/d, 3000IU/d and 6000IU/d in just 28 days. However, no difference in changes to 25(OH)D following

supplementation was observed between vitamin D groups. This suggests that doses above 1500IU/d do not provide any additional benefit to vitamin D status.

The effect that vitamin D deficiency and sufficiency may have on athletic performance is currently unclear. In **Chapter 4**, results showed that muscle function was not positively correlated with 25(OH)D when using basic assessments of leg and forearm muscle function (vertical jump and MVC hand grip). In addition, in **Chapter 5**, 25(OH)D was not correlated with any aerobic, anaerobic or strength performance measurement during the winter in endurance athletes. However, while the majority of athletes were vitamin D deficient and insufficient, very few were severely deficient (< 25 nmol/L). It has been suggested that the deleterious effects of vitamin D deficiency on skeletal muscle function may only occur at concentrations below 25 nmol/L [76-78]. Alternatively, **Chapter 5** examined the paradigm that improving vitamin D status to sufficient concentrations with vitamin D supplementation may improve muscle function and exercise performance compared to those who remain vitamin D deficient. The results presented show that despite elevating 25(OH)D to sufficient vitamin D status in all participants in the supplemented groups (> 100 nmol/L), no difference in aerobic, anaerobic or strength performance measurements were observed when compared to placebo. These findings are in contrast to causative and longitudinal evidence in the young adults [79, 80] and the elderly [81-85] that show an association between vitamin D status and physical performance. Yet, the findings from **Chapter 4 and 5** bring into question the optimal concentration of 25(OH)D that impairs or improves skeletal muscle function. It would be argued that the benefits to skeletal muscle function following vitamin D supplementation would only be apparent when deficient in the first place. In support, a recent meta analysis concluded that there was no significant effect of vitamin D supplementation (range of doses included 400IU/d to 60,000IU/wk) on leg or grip strength in the elderly when baseline 25(OH)D was >25nmol/L [86]. Further, in the limited number of studies in athletes, it has been shown that improvements to exercise performance only occurred when the majority of athletes were severely vitamin D deficient [71] while no improvement was observed when sufficient [87] prior to supplementation. On the other hand the target concentration of 25(OH)D

following supplementation may also be important, with many suggesting that 25(OH)D > 100 nmol/L may be required to improve exercise performance in athletes [71, 88, 89]. However, **Chapter 5** shows no benefit to exercise performance when endurance athletes 25(OH)D concentration was predominantly above 100 nmol/L. Therefore, it remains to be determined whether it is the extent of deficiency prior to supplementation or the concentration following supplementation that dictates the improvements to musculoskeletal performance.

The data presented in **Chapter 4 and 5** does not support the hypothesis that vitamin D status influences muscle function or exercise performance in athletes. This may be explained by the large number of factors that may alter vitamin D status and the response to supplementation to include: latitude, season, ethnicity, habitual diet, physical activity levels and body composition [56, 90]. Future research is yet to be conducted to elucidate the role these factors have on vitamin D metabolism and physiological outcomes. In addition, given the large number of factors that may alter vitamin D status and response to supplementation, future research should focus on larger sample sizes than used in the current thesis. The limited sample sizes, relative to the numerous factors that may have reduced the ability to detect changes in skeletal muscle function and exercise performance, used in **Chapter 4 and 5** is recognised as a limitation of the work.

The effect of vitamin D on skeletal muscle function, especially within an athletic population, is timely and novel. In order to gain further insights into the potential benefits of vitamin D for athletes, future long term intervention studies are required in combination with muscle biopsy methods. In turn this will identify the mechanisms of actions, the time course and optimal 25(OH)D concentration required to induce the specific mechanisms within the skeletal muscle. In addition, considering the limited evidence to date that illustrates that long term vitamin D supplementation when combined with exercise training may lead to superior adaptations to the skeletal muscle [91-98], it may also be of interest to study this hypothesis in athletes. In support, Carrillo et al [97] demonstrated that 12 weeks of resistance training, combined with vitamin D (4000IU/d), in overweight and obese adults showed significant improvements to upper body peak power above the placebo group. In the elderly it has

been shown that the response to training was attenuated when 25(OH)D was <47.5 nmol/L [98]. More recently it has been shown that elderly individuals supplemented with HMB, arginine and lysine significantly improved lean muscle mass, but the improvements to strength only occurred when vitamin D status was sufficient [99]. Therefore, vitamin D may be an important nutritional support when undergoing exercise training by inducing pro anabolic effects within the skeletal muscle [84, 100, 101]. However, the pro anabolic effects of vitamin D on healthy skeletal muscle adaptations, as seen in athletes when compared to the elderly [102], are yet to be investigated.

#### **6.4 Future research questions - Vitamin D:**

Following on from the studies presented in **chapters 4 and 5**, a number of key questions still remain to be answered:

1. Is the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency in athletes dependent on season of the year in the UK?
2. What is an effective supplementation protocol (dose and duration) to achieve vitamin D sufficiency in all seasons of the year?
3. What is the optimal 25(OH)D concentration to elicit benefits to muscle function?
4. Does long term vitamin D supplementation augment muscle function and performance in athletes?
5. What are the mechanisms to describe the improvements in skeletal muscle function and adaptations following vitamin D supplementation in humans?
6. What is the combined and independent effect of exercise training and vitamin D supplementation on performance and training adaptation outcomes?

## 6.5 Conclusions

**Chapter 2** illustrated that GTE increases metabolites related to fat and energy metabolism at rest, but not during moderate intensity exercise when using a metabolomics approach. The alterations to energy and fat metabolism at rest were independent of changes to catecholamines, which questions the relevance of the COMT mechanism *in vivo*. **Chapter 3** revealed that coffee is as effective as caffeine in improving exercise performance but the ergogenic effects were independent of changes in fat metabolism. **Chapter 4 and 5** highlighted that UK athletes require nutritional support to avoid vitamin D deficiency. **Chapter 4** showed a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency in UK university athletes from a variety of sports during the winter. The poor vitamin D status was likely explained by the high latitude and climate of the test site as well as low dietary intake of vitamin D by the athletes. It was also shown that vitamin D status was not associated with muscle function in the athletes tested. **Chapter 5** also showed a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency, which was corrected when high doses of vitamin D (1500IU, 3000IU or 6000IU) above the RNI (400IU) were supplemented for 28 days. The results showed that 1500IU/d improved vitamin D status to sufficient concentrations, with the higher doses of vitamin D providing no further increases. Despite all vitamin D groups becoming vitamin D sufficient, exercise performance (aerobic, anaerobic and strength) was not altered following supplementation in endurance trained athletes.

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