

## Response to ‘Comments on “Preliminary dietary recommendations for adult spinal cord-injured endurance hand cyclists”’ by Sharma et al.

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Dear Editor of the South African Journal of Clinical,

We thank Sharma et al.<sup>1</sup> for their insightful letter and engagement with our work. We appreciate their acknowledgement that the article<sup>2</sup> provides a timely synthesis of a sparse evidence base and highlights sport-specific nutritional challenges relevant to adult spinal cord – injured endurance hand cyclists.

As noted in the article, the proposed dietary recommendations were explicitly framed as preliminary.<sup>2</sup> We also acknowledged as a limitation that the recommendations were derived from a narrative review, and that the review methods were not reported in the level of detail expected for systematic evidence syntheses.

We agree that reporting frameworks such as PRISMA 2020<sup>3</sup> can enhance transparency with respect to search strategies, study selection, and potential sources of bias. Although PRISMA 2020 was not applied due to the narrative approach adopted, we acknowledge that more detailed reporting of the review process would have strengthened methodological clarity and interpretability.

Narrative reviews inevitably involve a degree of subjectivity. In developing the proposed recommendations, we sought to mitigate this by considering the totality of available evidence, drawing on both original studies and relevant position statements, and situating these findings within the broader literature on nutrition for para and able-bodied endurance athletes. Nonetheless, we agree that future work would benefit from more formal appraisal of study quality and clearer articulation of how heterogeneous evidence is synthesised.

The primary aim of our article was to stimulate discussion and research into dietary recommendations for spinal cord – injured hand cyclists, a population that remains markedly under-researched. We welcome this methodological commentary as a valuable contribution to that dialogue and as guidance for future efforts to strengthen the evidence base and refine nutritional recommendations for this athletic group.

Thank you again for your interest and constructive input.

Warm regards,

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### References

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