

ISENC Abstract

The Gut-Brain Connection: Practical Implications for Elite Sport

Yakult Science x UKSI

The bidirectional relationship between the gut and the brain, known as the gut-brain axis is an emerging area of research which holds great excitement and potential to enhance both physical performance and mental resilience in athletes. Changes in the gut microbiota composition can influence anxiety, mood stress response and cognitive function; crucial factors in elite sports environments. Conversely, mental health challenges can trigger unwelcome gastrointestinal symptoms which can be particularly disruptive for athletes during all phases of training seasons. However, dietary, lifestyle and sport psychology interventions targeting the gut-brain axis could prove a powerful avenue for realising the possibilities of improving health and performance.

During this presentation, Dr Holly Neill from Yakult Science for Health and Dr Danielle Adams Norenberg, Head of Performance Psychology at UKSI, will present an overview of the latest evidence, complimented with practical application and real-world case studies.