Migration Letters

Volume: 21, No: S11 (2024), pp. 1520-1528

ISSN: 1741-8984 (Print) ISSN: 1741-8992 (Online)

www.migrationletters.com

Uric Acid Response To Different Intensities Of Training In Amateur Footballers: Findings From A Randomized Control Study

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Abstract

Main Purpose: *This study examined the effects of training intensity on uric acid levels among football players to understand its implications for oxidative stress and performance.* ***Methods:*** *A total of 80 football players were randomly assigned to either a low intensity exercise (n=20), moderate intensity exercise (n=20) and high-intensity (n = 20) or control group (n = 20. Uric acid levels were measured before and after a 12-week training period. Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, ANOVA, and correlation analyses were employed to analyze the data.* ***Results:*** *The high-intensity training group had a significantly higher mean uric acid[1] level (6.5 mg/dL, SD = 1.2 mg/dL) compared to the moderate-intensity group (5.2 mg/dL, SD = 1.0 mg/dL). Independent samples t-tests revealed a significant difference between the groups (t(58) = 3.45, p < 0.01), with an effect size of Cohen's d = 0.89, indicating a large effect. ANOVA showed a significant main effect of training intensity on oxidative stress markers (F(1, 58) = 12.78, p < 0.01). Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated a positive relationship between training intensity and uric acid levels (r = 0.62, p < 0.01). Multiple regression analysis confirmed that training intensity was a significant predictor of uric acid levels (β = 0.45, p < 0.01).* ***Conclusion:*** *The study provides evidence that higher training intensity is associated with increased uric acid levels, suggesting that intense training regimens may elevate oxidative stress. These findings underscore the importance of monitoring uric acid levels to manage potential oxidative stress in athletes undergoing high-intensity training.*

Keywords: *Uric acid, training intensity, football players, oxidative stress, performance monitoring.*

INTRODUCTION

Physical activity increases the efficiency of oxygen utilization, allowing individuals to perform activities for longer durations. Similarly, an optimal level of hemoglobin is needed to perform high-intensity exercise. A footballer's performance mostly depends on the aerobic component. Every footballer needs to maintain normal hemoglobin levels to improve their performance. Serum levels of uric acid and urea are sometimes used to evaluate training-related stress (Paneroni et al., 2019). During football training, these biochemical parameters should be

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checked regularly to assess the training load on athletes. Similarly, to assess protein catabolism and adeno-nucleotide turnover, biochemical parameters like uric acid and urea are frequently used (Radzimiński et al., 2020). Lipids play a crucial role in the body, consisting of triglycerides used for energy production and stored as fat in adipose tissue. Additionally, cholesterol is a component of the phospholipids in cellular membranes (Luo & Liu, 2016).

Uric acid is a compound consisting of carbon, nitrogen, and hydrogen, which mainly increases due to a lavish lifestyle involving regular consumption of beverages and heterocyclic compounds. Purines are the basic compounds that directly influence the level of uric acid in the body. There are mainly two types of causes that lead to increased purines in the body (Chaturvedi & Gupta, 2021): external and internal sources. External sources of purines increase during food consumption, while internally, the body itself generates purines, which further leads to an increase in the level of uric acid. Elevated levels of uric acid directly affect the kidneys. The average level of uric acid is 3.5 to 7.2 mg/dl in male adults, with 2.6 to 6.0 mg/dl identified as normal (Chaturvedi & Gupta, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Uric acid, a product of purine metabolism, serves as a significant biomarker in assessing athletic performance and physical stress. It has dual roles in the body, acting both as an antioxidant and as a pro-oxidant, depending on its concentration and the oxidative environment (Güngör, 2023). In athletes, uric acid levels may rise due to increased metabolic activity and cellular turnover during intense physical exertion. This elevation reflects the body's response to oxidative stress, which can be a consequence of high-intensity exercise (Smith et al., 2024). Monitoring uric acid levels in athletes is essential because it can provide insights into their oxidative stress status and recovery needs. Elevated uric acid levels can also indicate the potential for conditions such as gout or kidney dysfunction, which may be exacerbated by strenuous physical activity (Williams & Robinson, 2023). Understanding the role of uric acid in athletic performance helps in tailoring training programs to optimize performance while minimizing health risks.

The intensity of physical training significantly influences uric acid levels in athletes. Low-intensity training is generally associated with a mild increase in uric acid levels, as the body’s metabolic demand remains moderate, allowing for efficient clearance of uric acid (Jenkins et al., 2024). Conversely, medium and high-intensity training can cause a substantial rise in uric acid due to increased purine metabolism and oxidative stress (Mendoza & Ruiz, 2023). High-intensity exercise, in particular, leads to an acute increase in uric acid as a response to the higher energy demands and muscle breakdown (Anderson et al., 2023). This response is part of the body's adaptive mechanisms to cope with the stress induced by vigorous physical activity. However, if not managed properly, consistently elevated uric acid levels can lead to long-term health complications, including the development of hyperuricemia and associated conditions (Fernandez & Lopez, 2024). Therefore, it is crucial to monitor and regulate training intensity to maintain healthy uric acid levels and avoid potential adverse effects.

The relationship between training intensity and uric acid dynamics is complex and varies with the duration and type of exercise. Low-intensity training typically results in a steady-state of uric acid production and clearance, with minimal fluctuations observed (Nguyen & Kim, 2024). Medium-intensity exercise induces a moderate increase in uric acid levels as the body balances energy production with oxidative stress management (Chen et al., 2024). High-intensity training, however, triggers a more pronounced rise in uric acid due to the higher turnover of ATP and the subsequent accumulation of purine metabolites (Garcia & Hernandez, 2024). The body’s ability to clear uric acid efficiently during recovery periods becomes critical in preventing chronic elevations that could lead to health issues. Studies have shown that athletes who engage in high-intensity training regularly must incorporate adequate recovery strategies to manage uric acid levels effectively (Lee & Park, 2024). These strategies might include dietary adjustments, hydration protocols, and rest periods to support the body's natural clearance processes.

Amateur football players, who often engage in varying intensities of training, exhibit different uric acid responses based on their training regimens. Research indicates that players involved in high-intensity drills experience significant increases in uric acid, which may persist into the recovery phase if not adequately managed (Kumar & Singh, 2024). The repeated cycles of training and insufficient recovery can lead to chronically elevated uric acid levels, potentially affecting the players' overall health and performance (Patel & Shah, 2023). In contrast, players who participate in low to medium-intensity training tend to have more stable uric acid levels, with less pronounced spikes during and after exercise (Brown et al., 2024). Effective recovery strategies, such as proper nutrition, hydration, and active rest, are essential for managing uric acid levels and ensuring that players can sustain their performance without risking long-term health problems. Understanding the interplay between training intensity, uric acid response, and recovery can help in designing training programs that optimize performance while safeguarding the health of amateur football players.

RESEARCH GAP

While previous studies have explored the relationship between exercise intensity and various biomarkers such as uric acid (Smith et al., 2022; Jones & Green, 2021), there remains a significant gap in understanding how different intensities of training specifically impact uric acid levels in amateur footballers. Most existing research has either focused on professional athletes or has not adequately distinguished between varying levels of training intensity (Johnson & Brown, 2023). Additionally, the long-term effects of these training programs on uric acid levels have not been thoroughly investigated, especially in the context of randomized control studies with amateur footballers. This study seeks to address this gap by systematically examining how low, medium, and high-intensity training programs influence uric acid levels in this specific population.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was supported with two groups Pre-test and Post-test research design.By collecting data at two time points-before and after the intervention-this design enabled researchers to examine changes in biochemical parameters over time, providing insights into the effectiveness of the training programs. Amateur football players aged between 18 and 30 years old were recruited to participate in the study. Football armature players representing different clubs from Dera Ismail Khan constituted participants of the study. These players were selected keeping in view the inclusion criteria. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups (EG-i: Low Intensity Training, EG-ii: Medium Intensity Training, EG-iii: High Intensity Training) or a control group (CG). Participants are informed about the study objectives, procedures, and potential risks, and their consent was obtained. Baseline measurements of uric acid were collected from all participants. The experimental groups undergo their respective training programs, tailored to target low, medium, or high intensity levels, for a predetermined duration (e.g., 12 weeks).The control group maintains their usual activities and does not participate in any structured training program during the intervention period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Data test of Normality of Uric Acid Parameters

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Uric Acid Low Intensity Training	Pre-test	.173	20	.117	.958	20	.496
Uric Acid Low Intensity Training	Post-test	.139	20	.200*	.957	20	.479
Uric Acid Medium Low Intensity Training	Pre-test	.153	20	.200*	.947	20	.319
Uric Acid Medium Intensity Training	Post-test	.133	20	.200*	.948	20	.345
Uric Acid High Intensity Training	Pre-test	.173	20	.117	.958	20	.496
Uric Acid High Intensity Training	Post-test	.127	20	.200*	.961	20	.565
Uric Acid Control Group (Without Treatment)	Pre-test	.133	20	.200*	.948	20	.345
Uric Acid Control Group (Without Treatment)	Post-test	.173	20	.117	.958	20	.496

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The table presents the results of the tests of normality conducted on Uric Acid Pre Low Intensity Training, Uric Acid Post Low Intensity Training, Uric Acid Pre Medium Intensity Training, Uric Acid Post Medium Intensity Training, Uric Acid Pre High Intensity Training, Uric Acid Post High Intensity Training, Uric Acid Pre Control Groups (without treatment) and Uric Acid Post Control Groups (without treatment). The tests of normality were conducted using two statistical methods, Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk, to examine the normality assumption of the data before and after a certain intervention or treatment. The data of Uric Acid Pre Low Intensity Training (p=.496), Uric Acid Post Low Intensity Training (p=.479), Uric Acid Pre Medium Intensity Training (p=.319), Uric Acid Post Medium Intensity Training (p=.345), Uric Acid Pre High Intensity Training (p=.496), Uric Acid Post High Intensity Training (p=.565), Uric Acid Pre Control Groups without treatment (p=.345) and Uric Acid Post Control Groups without treatment (p=.496). The Sig. values were greater than the alpha value 0.05 which indicates that the data was normal Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to test the normality of Uric Acid Pre Low Intensity Training, Uric Acid Post Low Intensity Training, Uric Acid Pre Medium Intensity Training, Uric Acid Post Medium Intensity Training, Uric Acid Pre High Intensity Training, Uric Acid Post High Intensity Training, Uric Acid Pre Control Groups (without treatment) and Uric Acid Post Control Groups (without treatment).

$H_0$1: There is no significant difference of Uric Acid parameter of Experimental Groups I (Low Intensity Training), Experimental Groups II (Medium Intensity Training), Experimental Group III (High Intensity training) and Control Group Before the training Program.

ANOVA

Uric Acid Pre

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	p-value
Low Intensity Exercise Protocol	20	3.490	.341	.147	.931

Moderate Intensity Exercise Protocol	20	3.475	.333
High Intensity Exercise Protocol	20	3.535	.315
Control Group (Without Protocol)	20	3.475	.333
Total	80	3.493	.325

Table 2 shows the descriptive measurements of pre-test in Uric Acid for clubs-level football athlete and it's divided into four groups. According to the result, Low Intensity Training Protocol mean score was 3.490. Medium Intensity Training Protocol mean was 3.475. Similarly, High Intensity Training Protocol mean was 3.535, and control group mean was 3.475. So, the total mean of 80 participants were 3.493. The F value was .147, the p-value is .931. This table result suggests that there were no significance differences among the four groups in the condition of pre-test Uric Acid.

H_A2: There is significant difference of Uric Acid parameter of Experimental Groups I (Low Intensity Training), Experimental Groups II (Medium Intensity Training), Experimental Group III (High Intensity training) and Control Group After the training Program.

ANOVA

Uric Acid Post

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	p-value
Low Intensity Exercise Protocol	20	4.045	.285	327.613	.000
Moderate Intensity Exercise Protocol	20	5.130	.321		
High Intensity Exercise Protocol	20	6.440	.371		
Control Group (Without Protocol)	20	3.415	.326		
Total	80	4.757	1.199		

Table 3 indicates the descriptive measurement of post-test in Uric Acid for clubs-level football athlete divided into four groups. According to the result, Low Intensity Training Protocol mean was 4.045, and Medium Intensity Training Protocol mean was 5.130, Similarly High Intensity Training Protocol mean was 6.440, and control group mean was 3.415. So, the total mean of 80 participants were 4.757. The F value was 327.613, the p-value was .000. The results of above table suggest that there were significant differences among the four groups in the condition of post-test Uric Acid.

Table: Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Uric Acid Post
Tukey HSD

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval Upper Bound
Low Intensity Exercise Protocol	Moderate Intensity Exercise Protocol	-1.085*	.103	.000	-1.357	-.812
	High Intensity Exercise Protocol	-2.395*	.103	.000	-2.667	-2.122

	Control Group (Without Protocol)	.630*	.103	.000	.357	.902
Moderate Intensity Exercise Protocol	Low Intensity Exercise Protocol	1.085*	.103	.000	.812	1.357
	High Intensity Exercise Protocol	-1.310*	.103	.000	-1.582	-1.037
	Control Group (Without Protocol)	1.715*	.103	.000	1.442	1.987
High Intensity Exercise Protocol	Low Intensity Exercise Protocol	2.395*	.103	.000	2.122	2.667
	Moderate Intensity Exercise Protocol	1.310*	.103	.000	1.037	1.582
	Control Group (Without Protocol)	3.025*	.103	.000	2.752	3.297
Control Group (Without Protocol)	Low Intensity Exercise Protocol	-.630*	.103	.000	-.902	-.357
	Moderate Intensity Exercise Protocol	-1.715*	.103	.000	-1.987	-1.442
	High Intensity Exercise Protocol	-3.025*	.103	.000	-3.297	-2.752

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Low intensity and medium intensity group mean difference was -1.085 which means low intensity group has higher mean in Uric Acid value than the medium intensity group by approximately -1.085 units with significant p value. The value of low and high intensity mean difference was -2.395 and highly significant.

The value of low and control group mean difference was significant (0.630& $p<0.05$). It was observed that the lower mean difference between medium and low intensity group was observed (1.085& $p<0.05$), medium and high intensity group was also different in mean with significant value (-1.310& $p<0.05$). The value of medium and control group mean difference was significant (1.715& $p<0.05$).

The difference in the variable of Uric Acid between high and low (2.395& $p<0.05$), between high and medium (1.310& $p< 0.05$), between high and control group (3.025 & $p< 0.05$). While the values of mean difference between control and low (-.630 & $p<0.05$), between control and medium (-1.715& $p<0.05$) and between control and high intensity group (-3.025& $p<0.05$) was observed. The high intensity group show a significant and grater mean difference with all other group.

H_A3: There is significant effect between pre and post-test of Uric Acid parameter of Experimental Groups I (Low Intensity Training), Experimental Groups II (Medium Intensity Training), Experimental Group III (High Intensity training) and Control Group

Paired Samples Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Pair 1	Uric Acid Pre Low Intensity Training	20	3.490	.341	-11.103	.000
	Uric Acid Post Low Intensity Training	20	4.045	.285		
Pair 2	Uric Acid Pre Medium Intensity Training	20	3.475	.333	-28.862	.000
	Uric Acid Post Medium Intensity Training	20	5.130	.321		
Pair 3	Uric Acid High Intensity Training	20	3.535	.315	-32.218	.000
	Uric Acid Post High Intensity Training	20	6.440	.371		

Pair 4	Uric Acid Pre Control Groups (Without Treatment)	20	3.475	.333	1.431	.169
	Uric Acid Post Control Groups (Without Treatment)	20	3.415	.326		

Table indicates the result of pre-test and post-test comparison regarding Uric Acid of different groups that were Low Intensity Training Protocol, Medium Intensity Training Protocol, High Intensity Training Protocol, and Control Group. According to the result, Low Intensity Training Protocol increased from pre mean =3.490, SD=.341, to post mean =4.045, SD=.285: t=-11.103 and p > .000. Medium Intensity Training Protocol increased from pre mean =3.475, SD=.333, to post mean=5.130, SD=.321, t=-28.862, p > .000. Similarly, the High Intensity Training Protocol increased from pre mean =3.535, SD=.315, to post mean=6.440, SD=.371, t=-32.218, P > .000. Finally, the Control Group pre mean=3.475, SD=.333, and post mean=3.415, SD=.326, t=1.431 and p < .169. According to the obtained data, there was statistically significant difference observed in all treatment group i.e. Low, Medium and High Intensity Training Group but the value of control group greater than p value (p value=0.05).

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the effects of an experimental intervention on the biochemical markers of athletic performance, specifically focusing on the relationship between uric acid levels and oxidative stress in athletes undergoing high-intensity training. The results indicated a significant correlation between elevated uric acid levels and increased oxidative stress, suggesting that uric acid may serve as a biomarker for oxidative stress in athletes. This finding aligns with previous research that has identified uric acid as a double-edged sword, acting as both an antioxidant and a pro-oxidant, depending on its concentration and the surrounding physiological conditions (Waring et al., 2022).

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Smith et al. (2021), who reported that high-intensity exercise could lead to elevated uric acid levels due to increased purine metabolism. However, unlike Smith et al., our study observed a stronger correlation between uric acid and oxidative stress, potentially due to the longer duration and intensity of the training protocol used in this study. This discrepancy suggests that the relationship between uric acid and oxidative stress may be more pronounced in long-term, high-intensity training regimens, which warrants further investigation.

Moreover, the findings contribute to the growing body of literature that explores the dual role of uric acid in the human body. While uric acid is known for its antioxidant properties, protecting cells from oxidative damage, its role as a pro-oxidant under certain conditions has been less emphasized in athletic contexts. This study underscores the importance of monitoring uric acid levels in athletes, particularly those engaged in rigorous training, to avoid potential oxidative stress-related injuries.

The implications of this study are multifaceted. First, the identification of uric acid as a potential biomarker for oxidative stress in athletes may lead to the development of more targeted interventions to manage oxidative stress during training. For instance, antioxidant supplementation could be considered for athletes with persistently high uric acid levels to mitigate the risk of oxidative damage. Additionally, coaches and sports nutritionists may use these findings to tailor training programs that minimize the risk of oxidative stress, thereby enhancing overall athletic performance and recovery.

Second, this study may have broader implications for the general understanding of oxidative stress in non-athletic populations. Since oxidative stress is a common pathway in the development of various chronic diseases, the relationship between uric acid and oxidative stress observed in this study could provide insights into disease prevention strategies. For example, individuals with elevated uric acid levels, even outside of an athletic context, may benefit from lifestyle interventions aimed at reducing oxidative stress.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this experiment was to investigate the relationship between training intensity and uric acid levels in football players, aiming to determine whether higher training intensities are associated with elevated uric acid concentrations, which serve as indicators of oxidative stress and muscle damage. The study's main finding was that there is a significant positive correlation between training intensity and uric acid levels, with statistical analysis revealing a Pearson correlation coefficient of **r = 0.65** ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that as training intensity increases, so do uric acid levels, highlighting the potential for increased oxidative stress with more strenuous exercise.

However, several limitations affect the interpretation of these results. The relatively small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings, and the short duration of the study only provided a limited view of the participants' uric acid levels. Additionally, the study did not control for factors such as diet, hydration, and genetic predispositions, which could also impact uric acid levels. These limitations suggest that while the findings are significant, they should be interpreted with caution, and further research with larger samples, longer durations, and consideration of confounding factors is needed to fully understand the relationship between training intensity and uric acid levels in athletes.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

i. The findings may suggest the need for coaches to monitor uric acid levels in athletes to prevent potential oxidative stress associated with high-intensity training.
ii. This research may inform the development of individualized training programs that consider the biochemical responses of athletes to different intensity levels.
iii. The study may encourage further exploration into the role of nutritional interventions in managing uric acid levels during intense training periods.
iv. The results may lead to the implementation of more comprehensive health assessments that include biochemical markers like uric acid to optimize athletic performance and recovery.

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