



# PERSONAL HYGIENE PRACTICES AND PERCEIVED HEALTH STATUS OF ATHLETES IN TEAM SPORTS IN UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, NIGERIA

BLESSING BASSEY ANAM, FELICIA ARBOR-OBUN DAN AND UNDIE ALFRED MAHAKONG

Email: [blessingsfavour20151ond@gmail.com](mailto: blessingsfavour20151ond@gmail.com), [drmrselficiadan@mail.com](mailto: drmrselficiadan@mail.com), [mahakongundie21@gmail.com](mailto: mahakongundie21@gmail.com)

(Received 5, February 2025; Revision Accepted 21, April 2025)

## ABSTRACT

This study adopted correlational design to established the relationship between personal hygiene practices (in term of oral hygiene and body hygiene) and perceived health status of University of Calabar team sports, Nigeria. Two research questions were posed which were translated into two null hypotheses. The population for the study consists of all the 120 students in team sports which include football, basketball, volley ball, hand ball in University of Calabar of which a sample of 120 athletes was used through Census approach. The instruments titled "Personal hygiene and perceived health status questionnaire" was developed by the researcher and validated by experts and used for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire using Alpha Cronbach Method gives an average index of 88. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at .05 level of significance.. The findings of the study revealed that personal hygiene practices (in term of oral hygiene and body hygiene) significantly relate with perceived health status of athletes in University of Calabar, Nigeria. It was therefore concluded that health status of athletes in team sport University of Calabar depends on their oral hygiene and body hygiene. Based on finding and conclusion of the study, it was recommended amongst others that sport managers should Implement educational programs focused on the importance of personal hygiene, specifically targeting oral and body hygiene practices in order to maintain good hygiene and health status.

**KEYWORDS:** Personal hygiene practices, Oral hygiene, Body hygiene, Athletes, Perceived health status Team sports,

## INTRODUCTION

Athletes are at a higher risk of infections due to physical activity, close contact, and shared facilities. Good personal hygiene practices, such as regular hand washing and proper care of sports gear, can significantly reduce this risk (Bader et al., 2020).

Maintaining personal hygiene can also contribute to better athletic performance. Athletes who practice good hygiene may experience fewer illnesses, leading to more consistent training and competition schedules (Smith et al., 2019). Personal hygiene practices are linked to self-esteem and body image.

**Blessing Bassey Anam**, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Science Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria

**Felicia Arbor-Obun Dan**, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Science Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria

**Undie Alfred Mahakong**, Nigerian Army Medical Corps, Bonny Camp-Lagos

Athletes who feel clean and well-groomed may have a more positive perception of their health and performance (Jones & Smith, 2018; Akpa, Anam, & Akah, 2024).. Perceived health status refers to an individual's self-assessment of their overall health and well-being which can be influenced by various factors, including hygiene practices. It encompasses various dimensions, including physical, mental, and social health, and is often measured through surveys or questionnaires. This subjective measure can significantly influence health behaviors, access to healthcare, and overall quality of life. Unlike objective health measures (e.g., clinical tests), perceived health status is based on personal feelings and experiences. Individuals who perceive their health as poor may be more likely to engage in health-seeking behaviors or avoid certain activities (Idler, & Benyamini, 2017; Anam & Ahueansehbor, 2017).

The perceived health status of athletes participating in team sports at the university level is a significant issue that influences their performance, well-being, and overall athletic experience. Despite the critical role of health perception in athletic performance and injury prevention. Most of athletes do not adhered strictly on hygiene protocols that can promote their perceived health status. Some of them who often exposed to various health risks, including infections and illnesses adversely affect their performance and overall health status. Athletes have varying levels of awareness and understanding of their health conditions, leading to discrepancies between perceived and actual health status (Okri, Idaka, & Inah, 2023; Okri Obi Anditung, & Benimpuye, 2021; Okri, & Idaka, 2017; Ibok, Ogar, Olofu, Masor, Etura, & Ukoh, 2023). The perceived mental stress, anxiety, and depression can negatively impact athletes' self-assessment of their health, affecting their performance and engagement in sports activities. The social environment of team sports in which the interact influence their personal hygiene behaviors which adversely affected their health status (Oluseyi, Anam, Obi, & Ajibola, 2022). Bader et al. (2020) stated that increased awareness leads to improved hygiene behaviors and perceived health. A research study conducted by Okwor et al. (2021) at the tertiary institutions indicated a significant correlation between hygiene practices and athletes' perceived health status, suggesting that

improved hygiene could enhance athletes' overall health perceptions. Adetunji and Adebayo (2022) research focused on the role of peer influence in promoting hygiene practices among athletes, emphasizing the need for team cohesion in maintaining health standards.

The importance of personal hygiene practices in sports settings cannot be overstated, particularly concerning the perceived health status of athletes. At the University of Calabar, athletes in team sports participants always faced unique challenges related to hygiene practices, which significantly influences their health outcomes and overall performance. Despite the recognized benefits of good hygiene, many athletes lack adequate knowledge or motivation to maintain proper hygiene standards, leading to potential health risks (Ibok, & Ntibi, 2020).. Many of them are not adhere to recommended hygiene protocols, such as regular hand washing, proper care of sports gear, and maintaining personal cleanliness. This always lead to increased susceptibility to infections and illnesses (Okwor et al., 2021). There is often a lack of awareness regarding the importance of hygiene in relation to health status among athletes. Educational programs addressing hygiene practices are not insufficient or ineffective, resulting in poor hygiene habits (Bader et al., 2020). Athletes' perceptions of their health adversely affected by poor hygiene practices. Those who neglect hygiene may report lower self-esteem and a diminished sense of well-being, which can further impact their performance and participation in sports (Jones & Smith, 2018). The University team environment can influence hygiene behaviors, with peer pressure and group norms playing a significant role. Athletes may feel compelled to conform to the hygiene practices of their teammates, which may not always be optimal (Adetunji & Adebayo, 2022). Poor hygiene practices can lead to outbreaks of communicable diseases within teams, posing a significant risk not only to individual athletes but also to the wider team and community (Ibok, Ogar, Basse, James, & Udo, 2024). The relationship between personal hygiene and perceived health status among athletes in team sports at the University of Calabar is multifaceted. As awareness of hygiene's impact on health continues to grow, it is crucial for sports programs to implement effective hygiene education and practices to enhance athletes' health and performance.

In the context of team sports where physical activity and social interactions are prevalent. Maintaining personal oral, and body hygiene is essential for enhancing performance and overall health in athletic settings (Ogar, Ibok, Odey, Joseph, Unimuke, & Ungie, 2023; Wilson et al., 2021).

Oral hygiene refers to the practices involved in maintaining the health of the mouth, teeth, and gums. This includes regular brushing, flossing, and dental check-ups to prevent dental diseases and maintain overall oral health. Oral hygiene plays a critical role in overall health, particularly for athletes who may experience unique challenges due to their lifestyle and physical demands. Smith et al., (2019) in their studies found that many student athletes with irregular dental check-ups, significantly lead to untreated oral conditions. Research conducted by Johnson and Lee, (2020) revealed that while student athletes may brush regularly, flossing is often neglected, which significantly influence their overall health status. Brown et al., (2021) found that athletes with poor oral hygiene often experience dental pain, which can negatively affect their performance. According to the study conducted by Miller et al., (2022), oral health issues can hinder proper nutrition, affecting recovery times and overall athletic performance. Studies conducted by Davis and Thompson, (2023) shows that athletes with better oral hygiene practices tend to higher levels of perceived health and well-being. Anderson et al., (2020) in their study found that many athletes face challenges in accessing dental care, particularly during travel for competitions. The relationship between oral hygiene and perceived health status among university student athletes is complex and influenced by various factors, including access to care and personal habits. Improving awareness and education on oral hygiene could enhance both oral and overall health among this population.

Body hygiene is another personal hygiene practices that influence health status athletes in team sports of University. It involves the practices that individuals undertake to maintain cleanliness and health of the body. This includes bathing, hand washing, and the care of skin and hair, which are essential for preventing infections and promoting general well-being (Akpa, Ekpenyong,

& Emmanuel, 2024; Ibok, Ogar, Olofu, Masor Etura, & Ukoh, 2023). Body hygiene is crucial for the overall health and well-being of athletes, particularly in the context of university sports where physical activity levels are high. Research conducted by Jones et al., (2019) revealed that most student athletes shower regularly after training and competitions, but there are variations based on sport type and personal habits due to poor body hygiene. A study conducted by Smith and Brown, (2020) found that many athletes report neglecting skin care, which lead to issues such as acne and skin infections. Miller et al., (2021) found that proper body hygiene, including skin care significantly links to a lower incidence of skin infections, which can affect performance. A study conducted by Garcia et al., (2022) found a significant positive correlation between body hygiene practices and self-reported health status among student athletes. Johnson and Lee, (2020) found that poor body hygiene significantly associated with negative self-image and anxiety, influencing athletes' overall mental health. According to Wilson et al., (2021), the demanding schedules of student athletes often limit their ability to maintain consistent hygiene practices. The relationship between body hygiene and perceived health status among university student athletes is significant. Promoting awareness and education about body hygiene can enhance both physical and mental health outcomes for this population.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between personal hygiene and perceived health status of University of Calabar team sports, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seek to established

i) the relationship between oral hygiene and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar

ii) the relationship between body hygiene and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar.

### **Statement of hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

i) There is no significant relationship between oral hygiene and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar.

ii) There is no significant relationship between body hygiene and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar.

### METHODOLOGY

The study area was University of Calabar. The research design used for this study was the correlational survey design. The researchers used this design to established the relationship between personal hygiene practices ( in term of oral hygiene and body hygiene )and perceived health status of athletes in team sports in University of Calabar. The population for the study consists of all the 120 athletes in team sports in University of Calabar which include foot ball, basket ball, volleyball, hand ball which formed a sample for the study. Census approach was used since the population is not large for the researcher to used in conducting the research. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire titled "Personal hygiene and perceived health status". The questionnaire was made of 28 items, with 8 items to measure each sub-level in terms of oral hygiene and body hygiene and 12 items measuring perceived health status of athletes. The questionnaire was based on four point scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. The instruments were face-validated

by four experts, 2 experts from Measurement and Evaluation, two experts in human Kinetic and health education, both from the University of Calabar. Corrections were pointed out by the experts and adjusted by the researchers and the document was considered valid. The reliability of the questionnaire using Alpha Cronbach Method gives an average index of .88. Since the reliability index is above 0.50, the estimates were considered high enough for the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme was used to analyze the data collected. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was for the three hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

### Presentation of results

The result of the analysis is presented in Tables 1 and 2. The hypotheses were tested at .05 significant level.

Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant relationship between oral hygiene and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is oral hygiene while the dependent variable is perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar. In testing this hypothesis, mean, standard deviation of oral hygiene and perceived health status were computed, compared and correlate using Pearson Product Moment Correction . The results are presented on Table 1.

**Table 1: Person Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between oral hygiene and perceived health status (N= 120)**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
Oral hygiene	120	22.342	2.789	.788	.000
Perceived health status	120	38.665	4.872		

\*Significant at the .05 level, df =118

The result presented on Table 1 shows that there is a significant positively high relationship between oral hygiene and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar( $r=.788$ ;  $p=.000$ ). With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was retained at the 0.05 level of significance.

The positive r-value indicated that the more they good oral personal hygiene practices , the better their health status tend to be. On the other hand, when they do not practices good oral personal hygiene , the poorer their health status tend to be..

Ho<sub>2</sub> There is no significant relationship between body hygiene and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar. The independent variable is body hygiene while the dependent variable perceived

health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar. In testing this hypothesis, mean, standard deviation of oral hygiene and perceived health status were computed, compared and correlate using Pearson Product Moment Correction . The results are presented on Table 2.

**Table 2: Person Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between body hygiene and perceived health status (N= 120)**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
Body hygiene	120	24.112	2.819	.812	.000
Perceived health status	120	38.665	4.872		

\*Significant at the .05 level, df =118

The result presented on Table 2 shows that there is a significant positively high relationship between body hygiene and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar ( $r=.812$ ;  $p=.000$ ). With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was retained at the 0.05 level of significance. The positive r-value indicated that the more they practice and observed good body personal hygiene, the better their health status tend to be. On the other hand, when they do not practice or observed good body personal hygiene, the poorer their health status tend to be..

## DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The result of the first hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between oral hygiene practices and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar. The finding agreed with Smith et al., (2019) found that many student athletes with irregular dental check-ups, significantly lead to untreated oral conditions. The finding is in consonance with Johnson and Lee, (2020) who found that oral hygiene practices significantly influence their overall health status. In line with this finding Brown et al., (2021) found that athletes with poor oral hygiene often experience dental pain, which can negatively affect their performance. According to the study conducted by Miller et al., (2022), oral health issues can hinder proper nutrition, affecting recovery times and overall athletic performance.

In agreement with this finding In line with this finding Anderson et al., (2020) found that many athletes face challenges in accessing dental care, particularly during travel for competitions. The result of the first hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between body hygiene practices and perceived health status of athletes in team Sports in University of Calabar. The finding agreed with Jones et al., (2019) who found that most student athletes shower regularly after training and competitions, but there are variations based on sport type and personal habits due to poor body hygiene. The finding agreed with a study conducted by Smith and Brown, (2020) who found that many athletes report neglecting skin care, which lead to issues such as acne and skin infections. In agreement with finding Miller et al., (2021) found that proper body hygiene, including skin care significantly links to a lower incidence of skin infections, which can affect performance. The finding agreed with a study conducted by Garcia et al., (2022) who found a significant positive correlation between body hygiene practices and self-reported health status among student athletes. The finding agreed with Johnson and Lee, (2020) who found that poor body hygiene significantly associated with negative self-image and anxiety, influencing athletes' overall mental health. According to Wilson et al., (2021), the demanding schedules of student athletes often limit their ability to maintain consistent hygiene practices.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that personal hygiene (in term of oral hygiene and body hygiene ) significantly relate with perceived health status of athletes in University of Calabar, Nigeria. The relationship between personal hygiene and perceived health status is crucial for athletes, particularly those involved in team sports at the University of Calabar. This study highlights that maintaining high standards of personal hygiene—encompassing oral hygiene, body hygiene, and general cleanliness—significantly relate to athletes' self-perception of health. Poor hygiene practices can lead to health issues, decreased performance, and negative psychological impacts, while good hygiene can enhance overall well-being, boost confidence, and foster a positive team environment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendation were made.

- i) Sport managers should Implement educational programs focused on the importance of personal hygiene, specifically targeting oral and body hygiene practices. Workshops and seminars should be regularly organized to inform athletes about the benefits of maintaining good hygiene.
- ii) Team leader should encourage Conduct regular assessments of hygiene practices among athletes to identify areas needing improvement. This can include surveys or health check-ups that focus on personal hygiene habits.
- iii) Coaches should encourage daily oral hygiene routines among athletes, including brushing teeth twice a day and regular dental check-ups. Ensure that athletes have easy access to hygiene resources such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, and sanitizers.
- iv) Sport managers should develop clear body hygiene protocols, including regular showering after training sessions and the importance of wearing clean uniforms. Establishing hygiene stations in training facilities can encourage better practices. This can help reduce the risk of skin infections and promote overall health.

## REFERENCES

- Adetunji, A., and Adebayo, O., 2022. Peer influence on hygiene practices in team sports: A case study. *International Journal of Sports Science*, 10(1), 67-75.
- Akpa, S. U, Anam, B. B. and Akah, L. U., 2024. Sexual Information Sources and Risky Sexual Behaviour Among Female Secondary School Adolescents In Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 23(4), 389-397
- Akpa, S. U., Ekpenyong, E. I., and Emmanuel, S. C., 2024. Perceived health stress on students' academic achievement in Mathematics in Mbo local government area of Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Research in Developing Areas*, 5(1), 130-141. <https://doi.org/10.47434/JEREDA.5.1.2024.130>
- Anam, B. and Ahueeansebhor, E., 2017. Effects of Recreational Activities on Sustainable Health Wellbeing Toward Job Performance Among Lecturers in University of Calabar, Nigeria. *Education for Today*, 13(2), 36 -43
- Anderson, P., Smith, J., and Brown, R., 2020. Access to Dental Care for Student Athletes: Challenges and Solutions. *Journal of Sports Medicine*, 34(2), 123-130.
- Bader, J., Smith, L., and Johnson, R., 2020. The role of hygiene in athletic performance: A review. *Journal of Sports Health*, 15(3), 123-130.
- Bader, J., Smith, L., and Johnson, R., 2020. The role of hygiene in athletic performance: A review. *Journal of Sports Health*, 15(3), 123-130.

- Brown, L., Johnson, R., and Lee, M., 2021. The Impact of Oral Health on Athletic Performance: A Review. *Athletic Health Journal*, 12(1), 45-50.
- Davis, K., and Thompson, H., 2023. Body Hygiene Practices and Self-Reported Health Among University Athletes. *International Journal of Sports Health*, 15(3), 200-210.
- Garcia, M., Wilson, A., and Patel, S., 2022. The Link Between Oral Health and Mental Well-Being in Athletes. *Sports Psychology Review*, 10(4), 300-315.
- Ibok, E. E. and Ntibi, J. E., 2020. Parental disciplinary practices and students' needs satisfaction as predictors of students' academic achievement in Mathematics in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Prestige Journal of Counselling Psychology*. 3(2),59-69
- Ibok, E.E, Ogar, R.O, Olofu, P.A. Masor, G.U., Etura, C.S., and Ukoh, K. B., 2023. Effects of role-play instructional method on Mathematics achievement of underachieving high ability pupils in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Contemporary Social Science Education*,4(2),27-33
- Ibok, E.E., Ogar, R.O., Bassey, A.V., James, D.D., and Udo, V. N., 2024. Perceived Health Disposition and Academic Achievement in Mathematics of High Ability Learners In Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental and Tourism Education*, 7(2), 349-361
- Idler, E. L., and Benyamini, Y., 2017. Self-rated health and mortality: a review of twenty-seven community studies." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 58(1), 1-17.
- Johnson, R., and Lee, M., 2020. Body Hygiene Habits Among Student Athletes: A Survey Study. *Journal of Athletic Health*, 99(8), 890-895.
- Johnson, R., and Lee, M., 2020. Oral Hygiene Habits Among Student Athletes: A Survey Study. *Journal of Dental Research*, 99(8), 890-895.
- Jones, L., Brown, T., and Smith, J., 2019. Hygiene Practices Among University Athletes: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Higher Education Health*, 11(1), 75-82.
- Jones, M., and Smith, A., 2018. The psychological impact of hygiene on athletes: A qualitative study. *Sports Psychology Review*, 12(4), 201-210.
- Miller, T., Smith, J., and Garcia, R., 2021. Hygiene, Skin Care, and Athletic Performance: An Integrated Approach. *Nutrition in Sports*, 18(2), 150-160.
- Miller, T., Smith, J., and Garcia, R., 2022. Nutrition, Oral Health, and Athletic Recovery: An Integrated Approach. *Nutrition in Sports*, 18(2), 150-160.
- Ogar, R. O. Ibok, E. E. Odey, S. E. Joseph, O. E. Unimuke, G. A. and Ungie, R. B., 2023. Emotional intelligence and Mathematics achievement of underachieving high ability senior secondary school students: a perspective of inclusivity in regular secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 22(3)311-319

- Okri, J. A. and Idaka, D. O., 2017. Relative effectiveness of differentiated instructional strategy on Mathematics achievement of senior secondary school students (SSII) in Calabar Education Zone: A means of achieving SDGS in Nigeria. *Education for today*, 13(2), 253-259
- Okri, J. A., Obi, J. J., Anditung, R. F. P. and Benimpuye, A. E., 2021. Classroom environment and SS1 students' report of avoidance strategy in Mathematics in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Inter- Disciplinary Journal of Science Education (IJ-SED)*, 3(1), 18-25
- Okri, J. A., Idaka, E. I. and Inah, L. I., 2023. Effect of Flipped Strategy on Achievement in Algebraic Concepts among Secondary School Students in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State. *Zamfara International Journal of Education (ZIJE)*, 3(2), 64 -71
- Okwor, E., Uche, I., and Akpan, E., 2021. Personal hygiene practices and perceived health status among university athletes. *African Journal of Health Sciences*, 8(2), 45-52.
- Oluseyi, A. D. Anam, B. Obi, F. B. and Ajibola, C. A., 2022. Special Sport and Recreational Facilities for Sustainable Special Needs Education Programme at Primary School Level in South-South, Nigeria. *Journal of the Department of Special Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria*, 7(1), 1-9
- Smith, J., Brown, L., and Anderson, P., 2019. Dental Visits and Oral Health Among University Athletes: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Higher Education Health*, 11(1), 75-82.
- Smith, J., Brown, L., and Anderson, P., 2020. Skin Care Practices Among Student Athletes: Implications for Health. *Journal of Sports Dermatology*, 14(2), 100-110.
- Smith, R., Brown, T., and Davis, L., 2019. Hygiene practices and their impact on athletic performance: An empirical study. *Journal of Sport Medicine*, 22(1), 34-40.
- Wilson, A., Davis, K., and Thompson, H., 2021. Time Management and Oral Hygiene: Barriers Faced by Student Athletes. *Journal of Sports Health*, 14(2), 100-110.