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Influence of Hypohydration on Intermittent Sprint Performance in the Heat

Neil S. Maxwell, Richard W.A. Mackenzie, and David Bishop

Purpose: To examine the effect of hypohydration on physiological strain and intermittent sprint exercise performance in the heat ($35.5 \pm 0.6^\circ\text{C}$, $48.7 \pm 3.4\%$ relative humidity). **Methods:** Eight unacclimatized males (age 23.4 ± 6.2 y, height 1.78 ± 0.04 m, mass 76.8 ± 7.7 kg) undertook three trials, each over two days. On day 1, subjects performed 90 min of exercise/heat-induced dehydration on a cycle ergometer, before following one of three rehydration strategies. On day 2, subjects completed a 36-min cycling intermittent sprint test (IST) with a $-0.62 \pm 0.74\%$ (euhydrated, EUH), -1.81 (0.99)% (hypohydrated₁, HYPO₁), or $-3.88 \pm 0.89\%$ (hypohydrated₂, HYPO₂) body mass deficit. **Results:** No difference was observed in average total work (EUH, 3790 ± 556 kJ; HYPO₁, 3785 ± 628 kJ; HYPO₂, 3647 ± 339 kJ, $P = 0.418$), or average peak power (EUH, 1315 ± 129 W; HYPO₁, 1304 ± 175 W; HYPO₂, 1282 ± 128 W, $P = 0.356$) between conditions on day 2. Total work and peak power output in the sprint immediately following an intense repeated sprint bout during the IST were lower in the HYPO₂ condition. Physiological strain index was greater in the HYPO₂ vs. the EUH condition, but without changes in metabolic markers. **Conclusion:** A greater physiological strain was observed with the greatest degree of hypohydration; however, sprint performance only diminished in the most hypohydrated state near the end of the IST, following an intense bout of repeating sprinting.

Keywords: physiological strain index, hyperthermia, cycling, hydration status

Intermittent sprint exercise, resembling the work:rest ratios of many team sports, is associated with a high level of metabolic heat production.¹ When this exercise is performed in hot conditions, this heat load is exacerbated. A higher thermal strain has been associated with a reduced sprint performance when intermittent sprint exercise is performed in hot compared with temperate conditions.¹⁻³ Some evidence exists to suggest that intermittent sprint exercise performance is not affected⁴ or improved⁵ in the heat, but differences in the duration and number of sprints and recovery periods between sprints may account for these discrepancies. It is unlikely that the subjects in those studies would have experienced the level of heat strain commonly observed in team games, due to the brevity of the sprint protocols, although core temperatures were not reported to confirm this.

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Limited evidence exists of the physiological mechanisms that underpin the decline in intermittent sprint performance in the heat.

Hypohydration has been commonly cited as one mechanism underlying the heat-induced decrements in endurance performance.⁶ Gonzalez-Alonso et al⁷ observed an additive effect from hypohydration and heat on increasing cardiovascular strain when performing submaximal exercise. Unfortunately, inconsistent results that can be explained from the choice and subsequent interpretation of methodological designs has led to a poor understanding of the relationship between hypohydration and anaerobic performance.⁸ Watson et al⁹ found 50-m, 200-m, and 400-m sprint times to be maintained after diuretic-induced dehydration (2.5%). Magal et al¹⁰ found moderate hypohydration (<3%) under field-based heat stress conditions to decrease tennis related sprint performance. Greater impairments with increasing fluid deficits were also observed in repeated resistance exercise performance.¹¹ It remains unclear if repeated sprint exercise performance that is common to many team games differs in a hypohydrated compared with a euhydrated state in hot conditions.

Although trying to replicate levels of hypohydration that athletes might encounter, the decline in intermittent sprint running observed by Maxwell et al³ only examined the effect of a 2% body mass deficit in temperate conditions. Sweat losses among elite team sports confirm that postmatch water deficits following exercise in the heat can be >2% due to variability in sweat response.¹² From examining sweat responses of elite professional soccer players training for 90 min in the heat, Shirreffs et al¹³ observed average body mass changes of 1.6%, but ranging from 0.7 to 3.2%. If sufficient rehydration does not exist before a second training session in the day, or before a match on a subsequent day, games players may begin a match in an acutely hypohydrated state. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether intermittent sprint exercise performance in the heat declines with hypohydration.

Methods

Subjects

Eight unacclimatized, male games players (mean \pm SD: age 23.4 ± 6.2 years, height 1.78 ± 0.04 m, mass 76.8 ± 7.7 kg, peak aerobic power [$\text{V}_{\text{O}_{2\text{peak}}}$] 59.9 ± 8.0 mL \cdot kg⁻¹ \cdot min⁻¹, sum of skinfolds 27.9 ± 7.2 mm) were recruited to participate in this investigation. Subjects were informed of the purpose, procedures, and possible risks of this study, which had the approval from the university's research ethics committee, before giving their written informed consent. Subjects were asked to maintain their normal diet and training, but replicate their dietary habits before subsequent trials and abstain from alcohol, caffeine, or vigorous exercise in the 24 hours before testing.

Experimental Design

This study involved three preliminary visits followed by three experimental trials, with each trial conducted over two days, in a crossover, randomized order one week apart. Each experimental trial required subjects to exercise on day 1 in a hot

environment ($35.5 \pm 0.6^\circ\text{C}$, $48.7 \pm 3.4\%$ relative humidity) to achieve a hypohydrated state ($\sim 2\%$ below baseline body mass) before they were assigned one of three rehydration strategies. On day 2, subjects performed the intermittent sprint test (IST) in the hot conditions described earlier in a different hydration state. All cycle tests were conducted on an air-braked cycle ergometer (Evolution Pty. Ltd., Adelaide, Australia) that monitored power output continuously and was modified to reduce the convective cooling effect from the ergometer flywheel. To control for diurnal variations in body temperature, day 1 and day 2 experimental trials were conducted at the same time of day, respectively.

Experimental Procedures

Preliminary Visits. Anthropometric data were determined on the first visit with skinfolds assessed from four sites (biceps, triceps, subscapular, and supra-iliac crest) using calipers (Harpden Instruments, West Sussex, UK), as described by Durin & Wormersley,¹⁴ before subjects were familiarized to the graded exercise test (GXT). The GXT was performed on the second visit to establish lactate threshold (LT) and peak aerobic power ($\text{VO}_{2\text{peak}}$). The GXT commenced at 70 W and power increased by 30 W every 3 minutes while cycling at 80 rpm until volitional exhaustion. The LT was calculated using the modified Dmax method.¹⁵ On the third visit, subjects performed three 4-s sprints to determine a criterion sprint profile in a nonfatigued state before performing a familiarization of the IST (Figure 1).

Intermittent Sprint Test. The IST was designed to mimic the physiological demands of one half of a typical team-sport game¹⁶ and involved 36 minutes of repeated-sprint exercise divided into 2-min periods of a 4-s sprint, 100 seconds of active recovery at 35% of $\text{VO}_{2\text{peak}}$, and 16 seconds of passive rest. The active recovery intensity was calculated from regression analysis of power output against

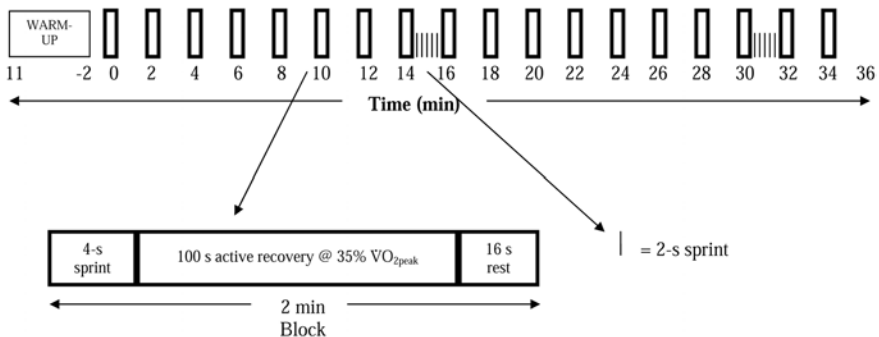


Figure 1 — Schematic representation of the intermittent sprint test. Each 2-min block comprised a 4-s maximal cycle sprint, 100-s cycling at 35% $\text{VO}_{2\text{peak}}$ and 16-s passive rest. There were also two repeated-sprint bouts which occurred during the 100-s active recovery following sprint 8 and 16 that comprised five, 2-s sprints separated by ~ 18 -s cycling at 35% $\text{VO}_{2\text{peak}}$.

oxygen uptake during the GXT. After the 8th and 16th 4-s sprint during the IST, a repeated sprint bout (RSB) was performed comprising five 2-s sprints with 18 seconds of active recovery between sprints. The RSBs were designed to mimic an intense period of sprinting, commonly experienced within team games.¹⁶ Peak power output (PPO) was recorded as the highest value during each 4-s sprint. No fluid was permitted by subjects throughout the IST.

Experimental Trial—Day 1. On day 1 (1300–1500) of each experimental trial, following the recording of baseline measures, subjects performed exercise/heat-induced dehydration (EH-ID) to hypohydrate by ~2% of body mass. The EH-ID comprised the IST, 15 minutes of passive rest, and 30 minutes of exercise at 50% of $\text{Vo}_{2\text{peak}}$ in the heat.

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three rehydration conditions designed to begin the IST either 0%, 2%, or 4% hypohydrated. Subjects in the 0% (EUH) and 2% (HYPO₁) hypohydrated conditions ingested a volume of water that equaled 150% and 100% of the body weight lost during day 1, respectively. The EUH trial also involved the subjects drinking 0.5 L of water 30 minutes before going to bed and within 30 minutes of arising the next morning. Subjects in the 4% hypohydrated condition (HYPO₂) received no fluids.

Experimental Trial—Day 2. On day 2 (0800–1000) each subject performed the IST following a standard warm-up that involved 5 minutes of cycling at 50% $\text{Vo}_{2\text{peak}}$, two repeats of 30 seconds of cycling at 70% of $\text{Vo}_{2\text{peak}}$ alternated with 30 seconds of passive rest and two 4-s all-out sprints separated by 2 minutes of cycling at 35% $\text{Vo}_{2\text{peak}}$.

Measures

Nude body mass was measured before exercise to the nearest 0.01 kg using electronic balance scales (ED3300, Sauter, Germany) and on completion of the IST. The change from baseline to postexercise body mass was used to calculate the precise fluid deficits. Fluid loss was then estimated from the difference between before and after nude body mass, and sweat rate was calculated.

During the GXT, expired air was continuously analyzed for O₂ and CO₂ concentrations using Ametek gas analyzers (SOV S-3A11 and COV CD-3A, Applied Electrochemistry, Pittsburgh, PA). Ventilation was recorded every 15 seconds using a turbine ventilometer (225A, Morgan, Kent, England). The gas analyzers were calibrated before and verified after each test (BOC Gases, Chatswood, Australia). The ventilometer was calibrated preexercise and verified postexercise using a 1-L syringe.

Heart rate (HR) was monitored continuously throughout all testing using short-distance telemetry (Sports Tester PE-4000, Bodycare Products Ltd., Warwickshire, UK). Readings of core temperature (T_{re}) were taken continuously on a 1000-series, 8-bit Squirrel meter logger (Grant Instruments Ltd., Cambridge, UK) using a rectal probe inserted ~10 cm beyond the anal sphincter. The physiological strain index (PSI) was calculated from exercising HR and T_{re} and categorized from 0 (no strain) to 10 (very high strain) using the following equation:¹⁷

$$\text{PSI} = 5(T_{\text{ret}} - T_{\text{re0}}) \times (39.5 - T_{\text{re0}})^{-1} + 5(\text{HR}_t - \text{HR}_0) \times (180 - \text{HR}_0)^{-1}$$

where T_{re0} and HR_0 are the initial T_{re} and HR, respectively, and T_{ret} and HR_t are simultaneous measurements taken at any time.

A hyperemic ointment (Finalgon, Boehringer Ingelheim, Germany) was applied to the earlobe of each subject 5 minutes before initial blood sampling. Glass capillary tubes were used to collect 35 μL of blood during the GXT (D957G-70 to 35, Clinitubes, Radiometer Copenhagen) and $2 \times 125 \mu\text{L}$ of blood during the IST (D957G-70 to 125, Clinitubes). Capillary blood samples were taken at rest following a 20-min stabilization period and immediately following each 3-min stage of the GXT. Capillary blood samples were also taken at rest, after warm-up, following the RSBs during the IST, and on completion of the IST; all in a seated position.

Whole blood pH, lactate ($[\text{La}^-]$), hemoglobin ([Hb]), and hematocrit (Hct) concentration were determined using a blood gas analyzer (ABL 625, Radiometer Copenhagen) calibrated using precision standards and assessed by external quality controls. Percentage change in plasma volume was estimated from whole blood Hct and [Hb] values.¹⁸

Urine samples were collected into 20-mL glass containers on arrival to the laboratory. Urine samples were immediately analyzed for urine color (U_{col}) and specific gravity (U_{sg}), before 5 mL was drawn off and frozen at -70°C in inert microcentrifuge tubes for later analysis of urine osmolality (U_{osm}). Urine color was determined independently by two investigators using an 8-point color chart; specific gravity was measured by pipetting 1 mL of urine onto the plate of a hand-held refractometer (URICON-NE 2722, Atago Co., Ltd.). Before measurement of U_{osm} , the sample was thawed, incubated in a 37°C water bath for 15 minutes and mixed with a vortex shaker. Triplicate measurements of U_{osm} were taken on each sample using a freeze-point depression osmometer (210, Fisk Associates, Burlington, MA).

Subjects' perception of effort during exercise was determined from a 15-point rating of perceived exertion (RPE) scale,¹⁹ whereas thermal sensation (TS) and perceived thirst (PT) were determined using an 8-category²⁰ and 9-category²¹ scale, respectively. Whole-body ratings of TS and PT were recorded at rest, after warm-up, and 1 minute into every fifth 2-min block during the IST. Measurements of RPE were recorded after warm-up and at the same time points as TS and PT during the IST.

Statistical Analyses

All data were checked for normality and where there was a significant violation of sphericity the Huynh-Feldt correction factor was used. Two-way repeated-measures ANOVA was used to test for interaction within dependent variables (condition \times time). When significance was obtained, Tukey's honestly significant difference post hoc test was performed to identify pairwise differences between means. Friedman's two-way ANOVA was used to test for differences in RPE, TS, and PT. The software SPSS (version 12.0) was used. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationship between change in hypohydration and change in sprint performance indices as calculated from the criterion sprint data of the preliminary visits. Statistical significance was set at $P < .05$ and all values are reported as means (SD).

Results

Hydration Indices

Hydration markers on day 1 and 2 are shown in Table 1. EH-ID reduced body mass for all conditions from baseline to postexercise values. Both Hct and [Hb] were greater post EH-ID for EUH, HYPO₁ and HYPO₂, whereas U_{osm} and U_{sg} demonstrated no differences from the EH-ID used during day 1 (Table 1). Following EH-ID, U_{col} was greater in the HYPO₁ condition only ($P = .02$).

The EUH trial was not different for any hydration marker between baseline values day 1 and 2, although body mass did approach a significant reduction between days ($-0.62 \pm 0.74\%$, $P = .053$, Table 1). EH-ID combined with the respective rehydration strategy caused body mass deficits of -1.79% and -3.89% in the HYPO₁ ($P < .002$) and HYPO₂ ($P < .001$) trials, respectively. Values for U_{osm} , U_{sg} , and U_{col} significantly increased between day 1 and 2 for both hypohydration conditions (Table 1).

Performance Indices

Despite a trend for a decreased total work with increasing hypohydration (Figure 2), this was not significant between conditions (EUH, 3790 ± 556 kJ; HYPO₁, 3785 ± 628 kJ; HYPO₂, 3647 ± 339 kJ [$P = 0.418$]). Power analysis, indicated that 55 subjects would have been required to detect a significant difference in total work throughout the IST at the 5% level with 91% power. Similarly, PPO decreased with increasing hypohydration (Figure 3), but this was not significant (EUH, 1315 ± 129 W; HYPO₁, 1304 ± 175 W; HYPO₂, 1282 ± 128 W [$P = .356$]). Peak power output relative to body mass ($PP \cdot kg^{-1}$) was not different between the EUH (17.3 ± 1.7 W), HYPO₁ (17.2 ± 1.8 W), and HYPO₂ (17.3 ± 1.9 W [$P = 0.932$]) conditions.

No difference was found between hydration conditions after RSB₁ for total work (EUH, 3396 ± 558 kJ; HYPO₁, 3551 ± 556 kJ; HYPO₂, 3431 ± 389 kJ), PPO (EUH, 1178 ± 257 W; HYPO₁, 1211 ± 167 W; HYPO₂, 1194 ± 121 W), or $PP \cdot kg^{-1}$ (EUH, 16.4 ± 1.5 W; HYPO₁, 16.1 ± 1.7 W; HYPO₂, 16.1 ± 1.4 W). There were also no differences in RSB₂ for total work between EUH (3463 ± 273 kJ) and HYPO₁ (3205 ± 622 kJ), or HYPO₁ and HYPO₂ (3189 ± 261 kJ). Peak power output showed no differences between EUH (1227 ± 108 W) and HYPO₁ (1167 ± 209 W) or between HYPO₁ and HYPO₂ (1125 ± 134 W). Differences were observed between EUH and HYPO₂ for both total work ($P = .004$) and PPO ($P = .01$). Peak power output relative to body mass showed no difference between all three hydration conditions in RSB₂ (EUH, 16.2 ± 0.7 W; HYPO₁, 15.2 ± 1.9 W; HYPO₂, 15.1 ± 1.4 W).

Physiological and Perceptual Indices

No differences were observed for resting HR in both hypohydrated (HYPO₁, 62 ± 15 beats·min⁻¹; HYPO₂, 65 ± 10 beats·min⁻¹) compared with the EUH (58 ± 10 beats·min⁻¹, $P = .58$) conditions. Heart rate increased similarly in all conditions throughout the IST, but it was higher in HYPO₂ compared with EUH condition

Table 1 Mean (SD) Hydration Markers at Rest and Postexercise on Day 1 and Day 2 in the EUH, HYPO₁, and HYPO₂ Conditions

	EUH			HYPO ₁			HYPO ₂					
	Rest (day 1)	Exercise (day 2)	Post-Exercise (day 2)	Rest (day 1)	Exercise (day 1)	Post-Exercise (day 2)	Rest (day 1)	Exercise (day 1)	Post-Exercise (day 2)			
BM (kg)	77.5 (7.3)	75.6** (7.2)	77.1 (7.2)	75.8** (7.2)	77.3 (7.8)	75.5** (7.6)	75.9** (7.9)	75.0** (8.1)	77.4 (7.8)	75.5** (7.6)	74.4** (7.9)	73.5** (7.8)
Hct (%)	48.1 (2.4)	50.1* (2.1)	48.0 (2.1)	50.3* (2.3)	48.0 (3.0)	51.5** (2.7)	48.9 (2.9)	51.5** (3.3)	48.6 (2.8)	52.5** (2.5)	51.0** (2.8)	52.6** (2.6)
Hb (g/dL)	15.7 (0.8)	16.4* (0.7)	15.7 (0.7)	16.4** (0.8)	15.7 (1.0)	16.8* (0.9)	16.0 (1.0)	16.9** (1.1)	15.9 (0.9)	17.2** (0.8)	16.6** (0.9)	17.2** (0.9)
PV (%)	/	-8.2 (6.0)	0.2 (10.5)	-7.5 (6.4)	—	-12.8 (10.1)	-3.2 (11.4)	-10.2 (2.6)	—	-11.6 (6.4)	-9.4 (3.8)	-10.4 (7.5)
U_{osm} (mOsm/L)	372 (269)	341 (263)	241 (168)	218 (152)	353 (187)	379 (165)	803** (129)	794 (96)	252 (135)	391 (270)	902** (93)	843** (81)
U_{sg} (g/mL)	1.011 (0.008)	1.009 (0.007)	1.007 (0.005)	1.007 (0.004)	1.012 (0.004)	1.012 (0.006)	1.025** (0.005)	1.024 (0.005)	1.008 (0.006)	1.009 (0.004)	1.027** (0.003)	1.027 (0.002)
U_{col}	2.4 (1.4)	2.6 (1.1)	1.8 (1.0)	2.5 (0.9)	3.0 (1.3)	3.8* (1.4)	5.4** (1.1)	5.8 (1.2)	2.0 (1.1)	2.5 (0.9)	6** (0.0)	6.5* (0.5)

Note. BM body mass; Hct, hematocrit; Hb, hemoglobin; PV, plasma volume; U_{osm}, urine osmolality; U_{sg}, urine specific gravity; U_{col}, urine color; TS, thermal sensation; comparisons made between rest (day 1) against post exercise (day 1), rest (day 1) against rest (day 2) and between rest (day 2) against post exercise (day 2).

*Denotes alpha value of $P < .05$ and **denotes alpha value of $P < .01$.

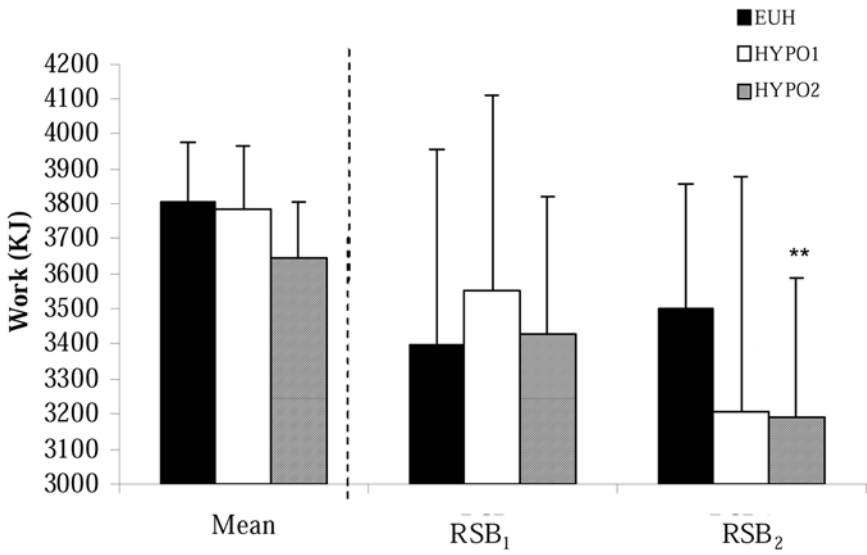


Figure 2 — Average total work during the Intermittent Sprint Test in the EUH, HYPO₁ and HYPO₂ trials. Left of the dotted line denotes average total work of sprints 1 to 18, while right of the dotted line denotes average total work for the sprint completed immediately following repeated sprint bout 1 (RSB₁) and 2 (RSB₂). ** denotes significant main effect between HYPO₂ and EUH for RSB₂ average total work ($P = .004$). Values are mean (SD).

($P = .01$). Peak HR was higher ($P = .01$) in the HYPO₂ (165 ± 16 beats·min⁻¹) vs. EUH (155 ± 17 beats·min⁻¹) and HYPO₁ (159 ± 19 beats·min⁻¹) conditions

Resting T_{re} was higher with increasing hypohydration (EUH, $36.7 \pm 0.2^\circ\text{C}$; HYPO₁, $36.8 \pm 0.3^\circ\text{C}$ and HYPO₂, $36.9 \pm 0.3^\circ\text{C}$), although this was only significant between HYPO₂ and EUH ($P = .03$). During the IST, mean T_{re} (EUH, $37.7 \pm 0.3^\circ\text{C}$; HYPO₁, $37.8 \pm 0.3^\circ\text{C}$ and HYPO₂, $38.1 \pm 0.3^\circ\text{C}$) and peak T_{re} (EUH, $38.1 \pm 0.9^\circ\text{C}$; HYPO₁, $38.6 \pm 0.3^\circ\text{C}$ and HYPO₂, $38.9 \pm 0.4^\circ\text{C}$) were higher ($P = .03$) in the HYPO₂ compared with the EUH condition. On average, T_{re} rose 0.4°C for every percent body mass lost. Physiological strain index throughout the IST was higher ($P = .001$) in HYPO₂ (6.0 ± 0.8) compared with both the HYPO₁ (5.4 ± 1.0) and EUH (5.1 ± 1.0) conditions. Peak PSI values showed a similar trend with HYPO₂ (8.1 (1.1)), being higher than both EUH (7.2 ± 1.3) and HYPO₁ (7.6 ± 1.1) conditions ($P = .01$).

Fluid loss was greater within the EUH (1.23 ± 0.24 L) compared with HYPO₁ (0.84 ± 0.42 L) and HYPO₂ (0.99 ± 0.19 L) conditions, but no difference was found between hypohydrated conditions. Consequently, sweat rates were different in the hypohydrated (HYPO₁, 1.36 ± 0.35 L·h⁻¹; HYPO₂, 1.32 ± 0.26 L·h⁻¹) compared with the EUH (1.67 ± 0.31 L·h⁻¹) conditions, but not different between hypohydrated conditions. Thermal sensation, RPE, and PT all increased significantly ($P < .001$) with increasing hypohydration.

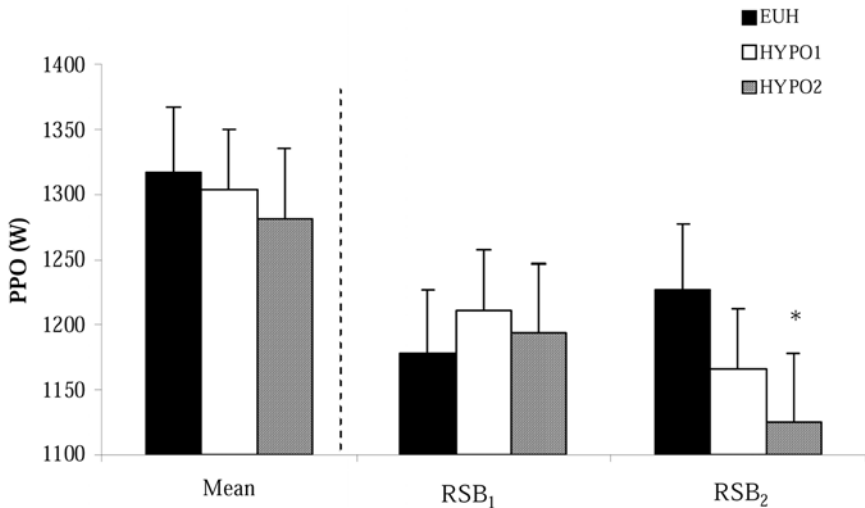


Figure 3 — Peak Power Output (PPO) during the Intermittent Sprint Test in the EUH, HYPO₁ and HYPO₂ trials. Left of the dotted line denotes PPO of sprints 1 to 18, while right of the dotted line denotes PPO for the sprint completed immediately following repeated sprint bout 1 (RSB₁) and 2 (RSB₂). * denotes significant main effect between HYPO₂ and EUH for RSB₂ PPO ($P = .01$). Values are mean (SD).

Blood Indices

No differences were observed for either pH or $[La^-]$ as a result of performing the IST in the three hydration conditions or in plasma volume changes (Table 2).

Correlation Analyses

A weak relationship ($r = 0.25$, $P = .25$) was observed between the percent decrease in body mass and the percent change in total work taken from criterion sprint data. A similar pattern was seen in PPO. Relationships between PSI and total work, PPO, and change in body mass were $r = .30$ ($P = .16$), $r = 0.36$ ($P = .09$), and $r = 0.44$ ($P = .03$), respectively.

Discussion

This study determined whether male games players, who were hypohydrated by as much as 4% body mass from prior exercise/heat-induced dehydration, could sustain intermittent sprint exercise performance that mimicked team sport activity¹⁶ under heat stress conditions. The principal finding of this study was that despite a greater physiological strain with the greatest level of hypohydration, reductions in work done and PPO were only observed after a second, intense repeated sprint bout during the latter stages of the IST. No relationship was observed between changes in these performance indices and percent change in hypohydration.

Table 2 Mean (SD) pH and Blood Lactate [La] at Rest, Post Warm-Up, Post Repeated Sprint Bout 1 (RSB₁), Post Repeated Sprint Bout 2 (RSB₂) and Post Intermittent Sprint Test (IST) in the EUH, HYPO₁, and HYPO₂ Conditions on Day 2

		EUH	HYPO ₁	HYPO ₂
pH	Rest	7.41 (0.02)	7.41 (0.02)	7.41 (0.02)
	Post Warm-up	7.39 (0.02)	7.40 (0.03)	7.40 (0.02)
	RSB ₁	7.37 (0.03)	7.38 (0.05)	7.39 (0.03)
	RSB ₂	7.39 (0.04)	7.40 (0.03)	7.39 (0.03)
	Post IST	7.37 (0.02)	7.37 (0.03)	7.39 (0.02)
[La] (mmol·L ⁻¹)	Rest	0.68 (0.19)	0.73 (0.21)	0.74 (0.13)
	Post Warm-up	3.4 (1.7)	3.44 (1.76)	3.31 (1.05)
	RSB ₁	7.48 (2.68)	6.80 (3.49)	7.54 (2.37)
	RSB ₂	7.48 (2.99)	6.57 (2.10)	7.53 (2.46)
	Post IST	5.23 (2.09)	5.40 (2.49)	5.05 (2.29)

Previous investigations have observed a reduced intermittent sprint exercise performance in the heat compared with temperate conditions and this has been associated with a greater physiological strain.¹⁻³ The PSI was no different between HYPO₁ and EUH conditions, suggesting that the PSI may not be sensitive to detect small changes in hydration status. However, Moran et al²² did find physiological strain to be ranked correctly over a range of hydration states (1.1 to 4.2%) using the PSI. Using the same index, physiological strain was also found to be different after prior exercise that resulted in 3% and 5% body mass deficits while under heat stress conditions.²² The PSI may not be suited to intermittent exercise, however, as it takes into account only initial and final values of heart rate and core temperature.

For every percent body mass lost, T_{re} rose on average 0.4°C, which is higher than the 0.1 to 0.25°C reported for endurance exercise.^{7,23} Although body mass was significantly lower in the HYPO₁ vs. EUH condition on day 2, this rise in T_{re} either had little physiological significance, or there had been sufficient time since the EH-ID for the redistribution of fluid from intra- and extracellular spaces of the muscle and skin to maintain blood volume.²⁴ That the blood hydration indices were not different from rest day 1 in the HYPO₁ trial, but were in the HYPO₂ trial support this. Alternatively, with such modest levels of hypohydration in the HYPO₁ trial, significant cardiovascular and thermoregulatory adjustments were not needed to meet the demands of performing the IST in the heat. In contrast, during the HYPO₂ trial a decreased blood volume at rest and during exercise will have increased blood viscosity, reduced venous return and cardiac filling, and decreased stroke volume and cardiac output—all resulting in a decreased physiological tolerance. Core temperature (T_{re}) and HR adjustments will have compensated for the increased level of hypohydration and may have prevented a significant reduction of cardiac output during the IST. However, following RSB₂ stroke volume may have been reduced where cardiac output could not be maintained,

even with elevations in heart rate.²⁵ The combination of intermittent sprint exercise and heat stress may have masked the consequences of mild, but not severe levels of hypohydration.

Several factors could explain the reduced sprint performance following RSB₂ of the HYPO₂ trial. An altered muscle metabolism and/or muscle blood flow and reduced central drive to exercise have been linked to declines in exercise performance in the heat. As skeletal muscle glycogen resynthesis is unaffected by hypohydration,²⁶ EH-ID is unlikely to have altered glycogen storage between conditions when subjects commenced the IST on day 2. Neither [La⁻] nor pH were different between conditions, which is consistent with research that has observed the debilitating effects of heat stress during intermittent sprint exercise without alterations in muscle metabolism,³ or blood metabolites.^{1,3,5}

Indirect measurements of blood flow taken during moderate exercise-heat stress suggest that an increase in muscle blood flow is not warranted. During severe exercise-heat stress, skeletal muscle blood flow is decreased.²⁷ The redistribution of blood flow to the cutaneous vasculature may have reduced the cardiac output that perfused the contracting muscle in the RSB₂ of the HYPO₂ trial and/or a decreased effective central blood volume causing a decreased venous return and cardiac filling. Both the vasodilatory and hypovolemic consequences of the heat stress and hypohydration, respectively, could have independently or simultaneously limited cardiac output in the HYPO₂ trial.

Behavioral changes (ie, confusion, loss of coordination, syncope) are often associated with hyperthermia-induced fatigue and indirect evidence that central nervous system function is altered in the heat. Increased central fatigue has been explained through a reduction in voluntary muscle activation (VMA) and associated with increases in RPE.²⁸ Ratings of perceived exertion and TS were both significantly higher in the HYPO₂ trial. If a reduced central drive existed following the RSB₂ of the IST in the HYPO₂ trial, an inadequate input to the motoneuron pool and/or the inability to respond to adequate efferent input could explain this. Either could have adjusted muscle recruitment and power output after the RSB₂. Under hyperthermic conditions, Todd et al²⁹ observed that a decline in VMA was associated with T_{re} of ~38.5°C. This T_{re}, although achieved by different heating methods, is similar to the peak T_{re} values in HYPO₁ and HYPO₂, indicating that moderate hyperthermia could affect the central nervous system without a “critical” T_{re} of 40°C.

An anticipatory thermogenesis regulation may react to the expected rate of heat storage and respond through feedback to the brain.^{29,30} The lower total work and PPO in RSB₂ of the HYPO₂ trial may have related to an anticipated rate of heat production during the IST. In contrast, the EUH trial may have attenuated any subconscious down-regulation of motor units. The last sprint of the IST across conditions may add support for this anticipatory response. Despite a lower total work and PPO in the penultimate sprint (ie, after RSB₂) in HYPO₂ vs. EUH and HYPO₁, there was no difference in either sprint performance index in the last sprint between conditions. An anticipatory pacing strategy during intermittent sprint exercise in the heat has previously been observed³¹ and may support a central governor causing an anticipatory thermogenic response.

Practical Applications

EH-ID used in this study may mimic a situation that games players might encounter on arrival at a second training session of the day, or on a subsequent day in a hypohydrated state. Games players may be able to tolerate hypohydration up to 4% of body mass without a significant decline in sprint performance while exercising in the heat, but when a critical intense period in the game ensues a body mass deficit of 4% could cause sprint performance to diminish.

Limitations

The IST was based on motion analysis of international men's field hockey¹⁶ and designed to mimic the physiological demands of one half of a typical team-sport game. However, cycling that only consisted of one half will have reduced the external validity of this study. If a running model had been used while being hypohydrated, it is conceivable that less weight would have transferred into less energetic cost, negating any negative effect from the hypohydration and consequently, sprint performance may have been better maintained throughout the entire IST. It is also possible that extending the protocol to a second half would have accentuated any hypohydration effect. The ecological validity of this study could have been enhanced with a rest period before a second half to mimic a game scenario.

Conclusions

In conclusion, while the exercise-heat stress appeared to mask the consequences of hypohydration during most of the IST, it was only when a second intense, repeated bout of sprinting took place toward the end of the IST in the most hypohydrated state that sprint performance declined. Peripheral markers of fatigue could not explain this reduction in repeated sprint performance. A central governor, possibly that mediates an anticipatory thermogenic response, may explain why sprint performance was reduced after an intense repeated sprint bout, although this can only be indirectly inferred from these findings.

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