

# The nutritional status of female ballet dancers 15-18 years



Dance serves as a means of entertainment for many people interested in the arts, but the majority of the audience is unaware of the nutritional sacrifices the performing dancers take. Ballet dancers specifically are required to have a slim figure in order to succeed in the competitive field of performance. Jane M. Bonbright, the author of "The Nutritional Status of Female Ballet Dancers 15-18 Years of Age", has studied many dancers and recorded their food intake over an extended period of time.

I think this article was not intended for a general audience but rather an audience with a background in physiology or food and nutrition. This article was appropriate for that audience and should be published. It was written in a very organized fashion with titles for each paragraph with new subject matter, a number of tables and charts to present the results in a visual manner. Many works were cited to back up the research in this piece of writing and Bonbright is a credible source for writing about this topic, which makes this a strong article. The concern for ballet dancers health was the main interest of this article.

It begins with background information on the body composition, such as measurements of the abdominals, biceps and thighs, of a performing dancer compared to a female non-athlete. The article continues to describe the calorie intake you must maintain to stay healthy using scientific terms, molecular formulas and decimal numbers. There was an extensive amount of research that went into the section of the article referring to the nutritional habits of the ballet dancers they were studying. Things such as the percentage of the dancers expected body weight for their height and how the dancers restrict the amount of calories ingested daily.

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A small portion was written about the methods used to obtain the information about the dancers health. That information made up the majority of this article by taking up a large section of writing with the results and findings of her research. Closing the article was a summary of the findings and recommendations for a healthy lifestyle, and lastly a list of references she credited. Credibility of an article should be closely examined; just as important as the words on the page is whether or not the author has adequate knowledge to be examining the topic. Jane M.

Bonbright could not have been more qualified to write this piece of work. She has an MA in Dance Education and a BA in Food and Nutrition. She has also actively participated as a dancer, performing classical ballet for forty years. Both academic fields of study went into the making of this article. Having that extensive amount of ballet training has made Bonbright aware of the increased number of intense training facilities available to young dancers and also gave her the opportunity to observe the pressure put on dances to maintain their ideal body image.

Bonbright uses her expertise in nutrition to investigate the dietary practices of the selected ballet dancers that were studied. She monitored the selected group of dancers diet for one week, and with the help of a computer analysis program she coded their nutritional intake. Not only does Bonbright use her expertise to backup her reasoning in this article, but also she uses a number of references throughout. She mentions references such as Dolgener, Calabrese, Micheli, Cohen and Braisted who all have done related research on this topic and contributed their findings to help support the authors point.

Bonbright supports her arguments with solid evidence and research. Much of her evidence can not be argued because it is solid numerical values that have been calculated and tested a number of times, rather than observation and conclusion where there is room for bias and contradiction. After Bonbright monitored the group of dancers for one week she came to many conclusions about their eating habits. Her results were percentages of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA). She found that only seven out of the thirty-two dancers met or exceeded the RDA for calories.

Bonbright did the same testing and reported the findings in the same fashion for the dancers protein, fat and carbohydrate intake. She uses comparisons also between nutrition facts of female non-athletes to the nutrition facts she concluded about dancers. I found the comparisons helpful so you could contrast, for example, the gap between their calorie intake and amount of calories used per day. Organization of a piece of writing is critical for the reader to have a clear direction when reading and a better understanding of the material being presented.

That is so vital because as a reader if you are lost when reading an article you may lose interest, put it down and never finish reading it. This article has a very strong, structured layout. Bonbright presented her material in a sequential manner; beginning with the intro then leading into background information and the methodology and closing it up with her findings and conclusion. Headings are placed at the beginning of a new paragraph to differentiate between new topics. For example the introduction is labeled as such, as is the conclusion and recommendations sections of the article.

Also when the author presented her findings, that section was also broken down into different pieces with separate headings for each different segment of information. This was helpful because if you were unclear about the material in the paragraph the title gives you some direction about where it is going. The numeric findings were both explained in writing and displayed visually in either a graph or table. That was helpful in providing an organized visual way in which to present the data for the visual learner. Although this was a very well written article it also has its flaws.

If anyone other than the intended audience, a dancer, choreographer or nutritionist, read this piece they would be disinterested in it. They may find the subject matter intriguing, but the dance terminology, scientific and nutritional specific language may be found confusing to the general audience. Dance terminology such as allegro and barre may be unfamiliar to some just as the chemical formulas and percentages of body fat or calories seem like a jumble of meaningless numbers and letters. If this article were written in more general terms, without the technical language, a larger audience could appreciate it.

As an article published for the Dance Research Journal it has fulfilled the task of being an informative piece of word. The author's credentials were significant to the topic of this article and provided her with qualifications so that the audience would find this material significant. The presentation of the well-researched material was done sequentially. The visual display of Bonbright's findings was also a positive addition in the organization of the article. As a dancer myself I found this to make some interesting conclusions and helpful recommendations for healthier living.

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