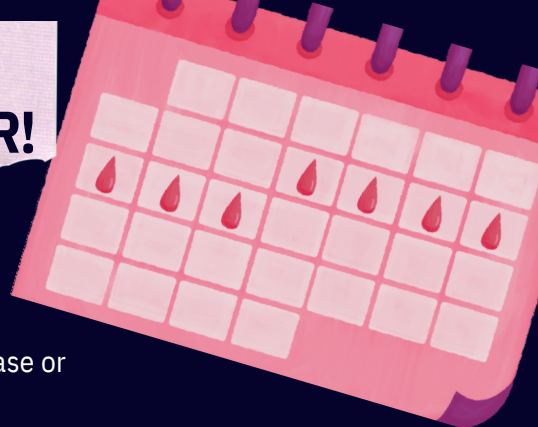


# “That time of the month”... FOR THE BIGGEST EVENT OF YOUR CAREER!



To understand what Australian **elite female athletes think about** the effect of their **menstrual cycle** on performance. **Why?**

- Both general and athletic populations frequently report menstrual symptoms such as pain, fatigue, and heavy bleeding
- There is not enough evidence to determine if the menstrual cycle phase or menstrual symptoms affect performance



## PARTICIPANTS



# 195

**FEMALE ATHLETES**

Training towards Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games

## ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE



# 24

**AUSTRALIAN**

NATIONAL SPORTING ORGANISATIONS

# 58%

**USE HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION**

**36%** take a combined oral contraceptive pill

**20%** use a progestin-releasing intrauterine contraceptive (IUD)

## RESULTS

### PREFERRED TIME TO COMPETE IN AN OLYMPIC OR PARALYMPIC FINAL



#### Naturally cycling athletes

- 55% just after their period
- 4% late-cycle
- 1% during period

#### In aesthetic sports

- ~65% just after period
- 0% late-cycle
- 0% during period

■ During your period ■ Just after your period ■ Mid Cycle ■ Late Cycle ■ Unsure ■ N/A

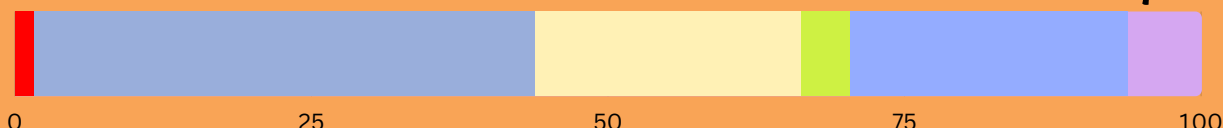


Figure 1. Proportion of athletes reporting their preferred phase of their menstrual cycle to compete in an Olympic or Paralympic final

2/3 of athletes called for “more focus” (i.e., education) on the menstrual cycle and female performance in sport

## WHO PERCEIVES THEY ARE ‘AFFECTED’?

# 2/3

**OF ATHLETES REPORT THAT THEIR MENSTRUAL CYCLE AFFECTS THEIR PERFORMANCE**



**66%**  
IN TRAINING  
VS

**58%**  
IN COMPETITION

- Athletes who experienced three or more menstrual symptoms were twice as likely to report feeling affected
- Athletes who **reported pain** and those using analgesia
- Para-athletes more affected than able bodied peers

## NEXT STEPS

- > Stronger focus on supporting para-athletes and athletes in aesthetic sports given higher numbers of feeling affected
- > Raise awareness about menstrual cycle tracking
- > Improve education for athletes and role holders around menstrual cycle
- > Screen athletes for menstrual cycle related pain
- > Encourage more high-quality research in this space

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