Collegiate athletes show significantly high levels of gastrointestinal issues associated with avoidant/restrictive food behaviors and sport performance anxiety.

**Performance Anxiety, GI Symptoms and Fear of Food Among Collegiate Student-Athletes**

Sophia Glinski, Katalin Pritchard, and Melissa Hunt, Ph.D. (University of Pennsylvania)

**BACKGROUND**
- Stress is common in collegiate athletes
- Collegiate athletes often suffer from elevated GI symptoms, sport performance anxiety and restrictive eating

**METHOD: STUDY 1**
What is the relationship between anxiety about performance in high-intensity athletic training/competition contexts, GI symptoms, and avoidant and restrictive food habits?

Study Design:
- Cross-sectional study
- n = 147 student-athletes
- 83.7% female
- Mean age = 19.9 years
- 84 undergraduate institutions
- 20 different sports

Participants completed a survey about their sport performance anxiety, GI symptoms, and avoidant/restrictive food behaviors.

All variables significantly correlated at the p < .001 level
(GI symptom severity, fear of food, fear-based ARFID, visceral sensitivity, sport performance anxiety)

Evidence that sport performance anxiety predicts GI symptoms, and GI distress predicts fear of food

**RESULTS: STUDY 2**

- GI Distress
- Nausea/Vomiting, Diarrhea, Constipation, Cramping, etc.
- Performance Anxiety
- Sweating, Jitteriness/shaking, increased heart rate, negative self-talk, GI distress, etc.

“"I don’t know anyone on the team who doesn’t experience this. So I guess... we all just think this is normal.””

We conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with n = 10 student-athletes to identify recurrent themes at the idiographic level in college athletes who experience performance anxiety, GI symptoms, and avoidant/restrictive food behaviors.