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HNR 499 Honors Senior Project

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Honors Senior Project Reflection

Throughout this senior project, I was able to research current literature on branched chain amino acid (BCAA) supplements and whether there were any significant benefits from these products, specifically in regards to muscle recovery and muscle growth. The idea behind this topic came from the question of whether BCAA supplements were effective or not, as I knew several peers who took exercise supplements, and I was interested to see if these supplements really do what they say they claim to do. Looking into it further, I was surprised to find how large the industry of exercise supplements is and decided to dig deeper into whether BCAA's claims to reduce muscle soreness, accelerate recovery, and increase muscle growth are accurate.

Researching about BCAAs brought me to many various studies that went in depth about the physiological and biochemical pathways that occur in the body in regards to amino acids and their functions. It challenged my brain to absorb new information while searching for further explanation when studies mentioned new concepts or terms I was unfamiliar with, combining multiple disciplines that I've learned including biochemistry, nutrition, and exercise prescription. This also helped me determine reliable sources and databases that I can use in research for future reference and developed my research skills for how to efficiently review many articles at once.

Overall, this senior project has brought a deeper understanding around research, combining the knowledge I've learned within the Clinical Exercise Science program with my interests surrounding nutrition and exercise supplements, and it has brought new questions about BCAA supplementation (e.g. is there a best regimen to take it?) as well as other dietary supplements, such as creatine and nootropics, that I would be interested in looking into further.