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Anthropometry in Sports Science and its significance

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Anthropometry is a technique to measure physical characteristics (body size, shape of specific body parts and proportion) of living beings, including men. Anthropometry has been widely applied in a broad range of disciplines, such as ergonomics and health sciences. Because of its convenience, anthropometry has also been applied to understand physical characteristics of athletes in the field of sports science which targets improvement of athletic performance. Since correct application of anthropometric techniques and interpretation of the information assist management of health status in athletes and also improves their performance, it is important that support staff in the athletic fields, including sports dieticians, share the knowledge associated with anthropology.

To date, the measurement protocol proposed by the International Society for the Advancement of Kinanthropometry (ISAK) has been recognised as an international standard for anthropometric measurements in health and sports science and has been applied across many countries. In addition, there are countries that encourage health professionals to acquire ISAK qualification.

In Japan, a lack of human resources who are capable of conducting appropriate anthropometric measurements has been a concern across disciplines. Reducing the shortage of human resources with appropriate measurement techniques has been considered a future challenge. It is hoped that the international measurement protocol such as that by ISAK to be recognized widely in the sports sciences also and will lead to development of human resources skilled in anthropometry.