

Association and collaboration: the research antidote to physical distancing?

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Collaboration is an established and valued objective within the military, highly successful organisations, and applied sport. In the future, dissemination and realisation of high-quality research in sports medicine will be rooted in collaboration that bridges gaps between statisticians, researchers and clinical content experts. Distancing in this field is antisocial, smothering and silencing: ultimately keeping your distance undermines progress!

Similar to the sentiment expressed by Exeter's Dr Robert Mann (UK) in his editorial about athletes as a community (*see page 1071*), we, the wider sports medicine community, have demonstrated during these times of distancing a remarkable social interconnection that helps make us all better. This Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Sport and Exercise Medicine (ACPSEM) issue of BJSM offers much to professionals with an interest in teamwork, and who value cooperation to help validate the evidence that can be implemented with appropriate sporting populations for future success. An antidote to antisocial distanced silos!

ANALYSE THIS—ACCURATELY, AND WITHIN THE APPROPRIATE CONTEXT!

The extensive and fascinating analysis of 3600 muscle injuries over 23 years by Australia's Dr John Orchard and the group from the Australian Football League (*see page 1103*) reminds us of the risks in the weeks following return to sport and the importance of managing and monitoring players during this time. Understanding each athlete and the demands of their sport when making return to sport decisions is highlighted in by Norway's Dr Hege Grindem *et al* (*see page 1099*) where the authors urge us to focus on the sporting demands and functional readiness of patients to reduce the risk of a second ACL injury.

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The context and content of our exercise prescription are a central theme in a number of the papers in this ACPSEM issue. La Trobe University's Professor Kay Crossley and colleagues' meta-analysis of the effect of injury prevention programmes in women's football encourage us to focus on the needs of the target population as well as considering the nature of the exercise prescription (*see page 1089*).

Understanding of the complex and contextual nature of sports injuries in women's sport is enhanced by the work of Laura Forrest (*see page 1108*) (University of West of Scotland) on performance and perceptions of menstruation on elite sport, plus the infographic by Grainne Donnelly (*see page 1114*) on support for women in the postnatal return to running.

An appeal for multidisciplinary collaboration is the conclusion within the Methods Matter education review by an international group led by Denmark's Dr Rasmus Nielsen (*see page 1119*), which satisfies the goal of summarising epidemiological and statistical topics with an emergent overview. The authors call for greater focus on evaluating the effect of individualised approaches to load management in different sporting subgroups.

This mainstay of clinical practice—effective decision-making based on

individualised and contextual factors with the specific needs of the patient at the centre of what we do—is the recurrent theme of this issue. How can we make better decisions? Can we manage return to sport better and minimise injury recurrence? What are some of the important population specific factors that we need to consider?

ASSOCIATION: RECOGNITION OF HIGH STANDARDS—THEN AND NOW

Many of these questions and more will be tackled later in 2020 when the ACPSEM (@Physiosinsport) comes together with the governing body, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP), to celebrate the centenary of the granting of the Royal Charter by King George V.

This charter was granted to recognise the high standards of the physiotherapy profession, and its professional standards. A hundred years on, this is as relevant to our profession now as then, with both organisations reflecting the original charter objective to commit to improve the training, education and professional status of physiotherapist members.

EXERCISE AND DECISION-MAKING: CORE PILLARS

In partnership with the CSP at its flagship 2020 conference for physios, ACPSEM is helping to deliver a programme of focused symposia around the key theme of 'Exercise and decision-making'. Exercise is a core pillar to physiotherapy practice, and underpins our interactions both with the general population, and with athletes we care for.

The decision-making and clinical reasoning processes relating to optimal loading and periodisation will have echoes throughout sport, from the recreational to elite levels of performance. The symposia directly offer deep understanding in exercise prescription, an applied approach to hamstring injury, interventions for shoulder pain, and a women's perspective on health, sport and exercise. Experts in the field have well-established backgrounds in academic and applied clinical experience.

Speakers have been encouraged to examine decision-making within their practical application of exercise to optimise outcomes, reflecting on the latest research in their fields.

Some call to action to close: see you at the conference. If you are not a member of ACPSEM join up for major benefits.

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