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CONTENTS

FROM THE CEO ____________________________________________ 2
Issues for members in the 21st Century

DR J ___________________________________________________ 3
Does competition really work

ATHENS 2004: The team behind the golden team
Sports Medicine Australia: the honour roll 6
How did we do it? 7
There’s science behind Australia’s sporting success 10
John Bloomfield
Drugs and sport – and the genie in the bottle 13
Brian Corrigan

ACSMS 2004: HOT TOPICS FROM THE RED CENTRE
Dead men walking?? 15
Simon Bartold
Sports injury in ATSI communities: a priority problem 17
Caroline Finch
Sport and osteoarthritis 19
Peter Brukner and David Baxter
3D anthropometry: applications to health and exercise science 21
Tim Olds and Mike Rogers

WHAT IS THE BEST FINAL 8 SYSTEM? ___________________________25
John Orchard

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH & WELLBEING _________28
Kerry Mummery

THE BULLETIN ___________________________________________29
Cover photograph of gold medal winner Sara Corrigan: Australian Sports Commission
Issues for Members in the Twenty-first Century

By Gary Moorhead

For most Sports Medicine Australia members, a love of sport motivates their interest in sports medicine and science. For many, that love is also fueled by an ambition to work with the elite practitioners of sport. However, changes to elite sport – and the way elite sport is perceived in the wider community – will have implications for SMA members. A post-Olympic environment is probably an appropriate time to reflect on where sport is going and what that means for sports medicine and science.

There is no doubt that elite sport is moving very rapidly towards becoming “entertainment”. What is the difference between Guy Sebastian and Ian Thorpe? (apart from the hair?) Both are products of exhaustive talent searches supplemented by intensive specialised training to sharpen skills, maximise their potential – and make money. The former achieves with gold medals; Sebastian with gold records – and with gold medals; Sebastian his success with gold records – and with gold medals, Sebastian his successes with gold records – and both with money. Much of sport, like many areas of entertainment is becoming dominated by a “winner take all” ethos. In popular music, the rewards go almost entirely to those at the very top of the profession – there are superstars and everyone else.

Consequences of sport as entertainment

Another trait of the entertainment business is substantial earnings for those at the top while they are at the top. In sport, if an athlete can make in five years the same income an average person takes a lifetime to earn, what compromises or sacrifices are “reasonable”? This question becomes even more pointed when the compromise can extend a career for another high-earning year, or make the difference between making or missing out on the elite squad. Team medical staff are at the pointy end of these decision-making processes which are fraught with potentially difficult consequences.

One example here is the impact of a growing body of research pointing to a link between high performance sport, sports injury and osteoarthritis (OA) or degenerative joint disease in later life.1 Most modern elite athletes would probably think the potential rewards outweigh these future risks but they do pose a moral dilemma for those with a duty of care.

Further, in team sports, the presence or absence of a star player can often determine the result of a crucial game. Sports medicine practitioners need to brace themselves for increased criticisms of their planning, maintenance practices and game day decisions. Sports medicine and science is becoming an increasingly “sexy” field for journalism. Sporting pages in daily newspapers are not only carrying large features detailing the injuries to players, but also predictions of likely recovery rates and chapter and verse on treatments. Jana Pitman’s knee and the mid-race collapse of rower Sally Robbins were bigger Olympic stories than most gold medals. An essential part of television and radio coverage of Australian Football League matches is regular expert commentary from boundary-riding senior sports physicians.

Peer and public scrutiny

Levels of peer and public scrutiny are high and will only get higher. A thick skin and tolerance for comment and criticism of clinical decisions and practices made under pressure and on the fly will be an essential part of the qualification for elite sports medicine practice.

Another certainty is criticism from community sport for the “bad example” set at the elite level. How many members have had recovery times questioned by patients who point to the quick return to play of elite athletes such as Jana Pitman and Shane Webcke and ask why this can’t work for them.

My dentist also services an elite football team. Apparently it makes no sense to attempt long term dental treatment of players until their playing days are over – for the obvious reason that while playing, the risk of further dental injury is always present. (A risk exacerbated by the low levels of mouthguard use, especially in training sessions.)2 However, elite players have the affordable option of substantial corrective surgery at the place of work. In a Federal election campaign, we are reminded how much money is spent on both the economy and health care. Bill Clinton’s campaign slogan was “It’s the economy, stupid”, whereas the 2004 Australian election seems to be as much about auctioning off greater Medicare benefits than about economic management. Medicare is almost directly analogous to taxation from a government publicity viewpoint. With tax, you let bracket creep slowly increase the amount that Treasury is taking in and then you give parts of it back in one hit (accompanied by a large announcement suggesting this is a “tax cut”). With Medicare, you let the rebate fall away behind not only health inflation but general inflation, and then in one hit you miraculously “give” a billion extra dollars to Medicare.

Despite both parties claiming they are going to spend unbelievable amounts on Medicare and health care, we still seem to do until we look to other countries that are performing no better than it was five years ago. It is also frustrating for many professions working in the health care sector how hard the work is for limited money, when there seem to be nearby examples of others who might be working equally hard but earning a lot more cash.

Why do some practitioners do so much better financially than others? By this I don’t mean more experienced and/or popular clinicians within the same discipline. I am asking the fundamental question about why an average surgeon makes 20 times the income of an average physiotherapist, even though both of them (nowadays) probably were equally academically talented and studied just as hard as each other.

Coming in to a Federal election campaign, we are reminded how much money is spent on both the economy and health care. Bill Clinton’s campaign slogan was “It’s the economy, stupid”, whereas the 2004 Australian election seems to be as much about auctioning off greater Medicare benefits than about economic management. Medicare is almost directly analogous to taxation from a government publicity viewpoint. With tax, you let bracket creep slowly increase the amount that Treasury is taking in and then you give parts of it back in one hit (accompanied by a large announcement suggesting this is a “tax cut”). With Medicare, you let the rebate fall away behind not only health inflation but general inflation, and then in one hit you miraculously “give” a billion extra dollars to Medicare.

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[1] The next answer that a surgeon might give you as to why his field is so lucrative is that we live in a capitalist society and it is market forces that show how much people value surgery as opposed to physiotherapy. I think this is actually the correct answer, but it is slightly more incoherent. Market forces are the darling of right-wing economists, but I believe that the market actually forces prices down in some professions and forces prices up in others.

Let be begin with an anecdote from fifteen years ago, when I visited the USA (the country most in love with free market forces) and rented my first car. I was travelling on a student budget, so when I arrived at LA airport at 8am I was looking around for fairly cheap car rental options. I saw a bus drive past with the slogan painted on it, “RENTAL CARS $7 per day”. This was 15 years ago, of course, but it still seemed dirt cheap at the time. I thought the cars might be bonds and there might be some fine print, but I...
thought it was a good start. I got on the bus and was driven a long way to the car rental office in a different suburb.

Guess what, if you wanted a car that actually had locks in it (and they didn't recommend driving around LA in a car where the locks didn't work) you had to move up to the $50 per day base price. If you wanted a car that took regular petrol and not LPG (which was only available at a few gas stations) the price went up further. If you wanted an automatic (and, guess what, the gear boxes on their stick-shifts weren't too flash), extra money. If you wanted the car to start with a full tank of gas, rather than on empty, more money. If you wanted insurance. It was more money still, and there were 4 types of insurance, for the 4 different types of person who could sue you. “We recommend getting the top type of insurance in the States, as our lawyers are pretty fierce”. Then of course there was a type of GST which hadn't been included in the quoted price. And I was expected to tip the dude who drove me to the rental office.

By the time I had asked all the questions that I could actually drive out of the yard, almost exactly ten times what I thought I was going to pay. It was also now getting dark and there were angry black dudless walking the street outside the car rental place. I signed up for $70 per day.

Just to show that despite this lesson I was completely powerless to stop something similar happening to me in 2004, I put my car in for routine service (with nothing wrong with it) during the State of Origin series this year (when I was too ridiculously busy than I normally am) and was quoted a price of $200-300 for the service (including the $40 fee for a roadworthy inspection). I finished up paying $1500.

I didn’t notice anything different with my car when I finally got it back, three visits later, but they had itemised 7 pages worth of stuff that they had to do to parts of my car that I didn't consider had anything wrong with them, but which we just ignored in the original quote. The $30 roadworthy inspection fee was their ammunition to list compulsory items that amounted to about $1000.

I was nade and looked very pissed off but I was too busy to take the car elsewhere and go through the process of being ripped off by a different company in the same industry.

There are some industries that don’t tip you off: airlines, for example. You can go online and find a $49 fare from Sydney to Melbourne and that is all you will pay to get there. (Just like when you visit a physiotherapist where you only pay for the quoted visit amount …). In an industry that isn't based on hidden extras, you only actually need two competitors (Qantas and Virgin) to create a market that is a fantastic environment for the consumer.

In a different industry, say banking, you can have dozens of different competitors, and they can all manage to rip you off. How much do you pay in bank fees, and would you pay any less by changing to a different bank? Wouldn't have a clue and wouldn’t have a clue are my two answers to these two questions, and I’m sure they are yours as well. Your bank is doing beautifully, and they are slowly sucking enough money out of your account to keep the industry as one of the most lucrative there is. The funny thing is that the customer will tell you approximately what the charge might be, but will say that it will depend on the surgeon, depending on how long he takes for the operation. The pathologist can’t give you a quote at all, because he or she doesn’t know what tests the surgeon is going to order, and at this stage neither does the surgeon. Your health insurance company may tell you that certain parts or braces from the surgery may not be covered under the plan you are on but that, since they don’t know what the surgeon is going to do, they can’t tell you whether you will have to pay any of these extra.

At the end of all of this, you either just decide you are going to cop a massive set of bills or you go back to your GP, ask for a referral to a different surgeon, wait another few weeks to see the new surgeon, and get told exactly the same story. Which surgeon is going to be cheaper? You don't know and you don’t care, you just decide you will pay whatever it takes to get the operation done. If the surgeon ended up doing a good job, you don’t care. If the surgeon ended up doing a bit extra and you have to pay another $500, you don’t care. After the saga is finished, you decide you are spending too much on health care. To cut back, you are going to...
ATHENS 2004: The SMA Honour Roll

SMA proudly salutes the 54 members and former members in the team behind our most successful Olympic team:

Bernd Adolph
Peter Baquie
Timothy Barbour
Peter Blanch
Timothy Brown
Grace Bryant
Louise Burke
Scott Burne
Jennifer Cooke
Barry Cooper
Narelle Davis
Vicki De Prozzi
Peter Eckhardt
Stephen Evans

Susan Everett
Keren Faulkner
Edward Fitzgerald
Peter Fricker
Andrew Gardner
Carmel Goodman
Lesley Gelis
Kingsley Gibson
Peter Harcourt
Gordon Hepburn
Stuart Hinds
Brad Hitchens
Ivan Hooper
James Ill

Patricia Jenkins
Andrew Jowett
Donald Kua
Shane Lenneke
Kelly Linauer
Neil McLean
Berth May
Simon Mole
Andrea Mosler
Damian Oldmeadow
Bruce Rawson
Bruno Rizzo
Dazien Roach
Julian Russell-Jones

Nicholas Sanders
Brian Sando
Denny Sherwood
Jeni Saunders
Ros Smith
Karim Stephens
Jim Stevanovsky
Mark Stokes
Annette Tonkin
Clare Walsh
Donna White
Robert Yarrow

Snowden Sport since Montreal.

We also present with pride the honour roll of SMA members who were part of the Olympic Team Administration.

And we introduce timely books by two former SMA Presidents and foundation members of the sports medicine and sports science community. John Bloomsfield and Brian Corrigan both demonstrate in their different ways how sports medicine and sports science have provided the platform for the remarkable development of Australian sport since Montreal.

ATHENS 2004

The team behind the golden team

Athens 2004 was Australia’s most successful Games. And one of the most-asked questions of the team behind the Olympic team was “How do you do it?”

We consider some answers to the question on the following pages in this post-Olympic special section.

We also present with pride the honour roll of SMA members who were part of the Olympic Team Administration.

And we introduce timely books by two former SMA Presidents and foundation members of the sports medicine and sports science community. John Bloomsfield and Brian Corrigan both demonstrate in their different ways how sports medicine and sports science have provided the platform for the remarkable development of Australian sport since Montreal.

How did we do it?

Athlete + Coach + Science + Technology

Like “synergy” and “spychronicity”, the word “convergence” is one of those modern buzzwords with a high-tech feel. Certainly not the sort of word one usually associates with the sweat and grind of sport or the glory of Olympic gold, silver and bronze.

It does however neatly capture the modern ethos of the Australian Institute of Sport, currently building – though not reclining – in the reflected glory of Athens 2004, Australia’s most successful Olympic games.

For the sporting record, Australia won a total of 49 medals, 17 gold, 16 silver and 16 bronze.

Of those medals, some 65 per cent, including 10 of the 17 golds, went to current and former AIS scholarship holders who claimed 289 places in the 482-strong Australian Olympic team.

Behind all those numbers, are more numbers – of people (coaches, trainers, administrative staff, physiotherapists, doctors, biomechanists, psychologists, physiologists, software and hardware designers, nutritionists, performance analysts) and dollars (over $14 million dollars).

And behind the numbers are networks and relationships – including high-speed digital networks and the old fashioned personal kind that have always existed between coaches, training, performance analysis and coaching, training, performance analysis.

It is the melding of new high-speed digital networks and the old fashioned personal kind that have always existed in the somewhat obsessive Australian sporting community.

More than any other factor, Australia’s sporting success in the 23 years since the AIS opened its doors can be put down to the latter – the relationships spawned and fostered by the AIS with the various State- and Territory-based sports officials and Academies of Sport, the national sporting organisations (NSOs), sports scientists and academics and individual coaches and support staff.

While those relationships are two-way, few would argue that the repository and leadership of knowledge and technical skill forged within the AIS headquarters in Canberra and the dissemination of that knowledge has been the key to providing Australia’s sporting elite with the proverbial edge that allows us to compete and succeed where other more populous and better funded sporting systems fail.

Senior staff from the Australian Sports Commission and the AIS who were in Athens for the Games will attest that the “How do you do it?” question was frequently asked in the various meetings with sports officials from a wide range of nations.

Those personal relationships and networks, built and maintained by the AIS, will remain crucial to Australia’s continuing sporting success and, as anyone involved in sport knows, the key element to success is the coach and the athlete. All the science in the world is unlikely to produce an elite athlete from scratch, despite what the prophets of the new genetics claim.

But the science and technology are becoming more important to gaining that winning edge – which brings us back to “convergence.”

It is the melding of new high-speed digital networks, new software and hardware, including nano-technology, and their convergence with traditional coaching, training, performance analysis and talent identification that is ringing the changes.

Within the bowels of the Sports Science and Medicine building at the AIS’s Bruce Campus, an array of scientific specialists and computer boffins have been quietly transforming the way athletes train, acquire skills and techniques, are physically tested, have their performances monitored and analysed, recover from training and have injuries treated.

There’s little doubt that Beijing 2008 will be the most high-tech games to date, which is fitting in a country that is embracing and producing modern technology at an unprecedented rate as part of the transformation of an economy that was almost entirely agrarian-based less than 40 years ago.

But before tackling Beijing 2008, another look at Athens 2004: it is not widely known that the sports in which Australia won most medals in Athens – swimming, cycling, diving and rowing – are the ones which have most fully embraced new and emerging technologies.

Cycling is and will continue to be a huge beneficiary of the digital revolution, and the experience and human guile of AIS staff, cycling coaches and some cyclists.

Last August, a team of Australian cyclists, coaches and AIS staff turned up unannounced in Athens which was hosting the European road racing championships on what would become the Athens Olympic course. This was a one-off opportunity to access a course that is normally grid locked on any normal day.

Equipped with small cameras mounted on their instrumented bicycles and tracked by a van full of AIS boffins with more cameras, the four cyclists filmed the entire course from a number of angles.

Back in Canberra, that footage and data were digitised and made into a virtual
Dr Lyons has spent more than 20 years at the AIS/PAU. He was previously Director of the AIS's Performance Analysis Unit (PAU) headed by Dr Keith Lyons.

This database is part of the AIS's dedicated software specialist Col Macintosh.

Cycling coaches from the track and road disciplines also had with them a video database “hard drive” connected to a laptop computer, with recordings of every performance by their rivals over the past four years allowing them instantly to analyse strengths and weaknesses in particular situations.

This database is part of the revolutionary work being carried out by the AIS's Performance Analysis Unit (PAU) headed by Dr Keith Lyons. Dr Lyons has spent more than 20 years working in this area with coaches and athletes. He was previously Director of Research and Enterprise at the Centre for Performance and Analysis at the University of Wales Institute in Cardiff.

In a recent interview published in an internal Australian Sports Commission journal, he explained the scope of his work: “Advances in digital technology have made it possible for suppliers to provide powerful software for game analysis and technical analysis.

“The PAU aims to match a coach's identified needs for analysis with the commercially available products to ensure cost and time effective solutions,” he said.

“The PAU uses a range of software and provides support to coaches who use both PC and Apple computers. Coaches are currently using software packages from Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America.

“Some coaches' needs are so specialised that the PAU commissions specifically written software for them. This software can be written in house or by commercial developers.”

Dr Lyons pointed out that there is a flourishing group of sport software developers in Australia that provide an outstanding resource for Australian coaches.

By far the most advanced and potentially revolutionary project, being driven by the AIS and Dr Lyon, is tapping into existing high speed digital transfer networks for use by a range of sports.

The AIS and ASC have formed a partnership with Australian Swimming Incorporated (ASI), the Australian National University (ANU), the high-speed network provider GrangeNet, and the private technology company VisionInites.

Australian Swimming Incorporated (ASI), has a video archive containing hundreds of hours of performances by Australia's finest swimmers and will supply the material to coaches and athletes around the country for analysis and discussion.

Much of this material will emanate from work undertaken in Queensland and Victoria. AIS will also provide the membership data to help index metadata to the video content from its centralised registration database.

GrangeNet connects Australian universities with a high-speed broadband grid. Identified centres in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Perth will be the initial recipients and providers of the high quality digital video files and race/stroke analysis.

Once downloaded, this high quality video will be analysed on local machines with streaming-specific video analysis software. The initial analysis can also be shared via the same method enabling a sports scientist at one of the identified centres to do much of the time-intensive analysis of the video for the coaches.

The ASC and the AIS believe that the use of innovative technologies is especially important in a huge country with a small population like Australia and that they offer Australian sport an opportunity to sustain that competitive edge.

The system concept, once fully operational, will be expanded to a wider range of sports for use by coaches and athletes in the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

When it comes to scientific innovation and potential for massive change in sport, the collaborative venture between the ASC/ASIC and the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for microTechnology is creating enormous excitement in the sporting community.

Since the AIS began back in 1981 coaches have been asking their sport scientists practical but difficult questions about training and competition, like:

• Is my athlete tired?
• Does my athlete have what it takes to be a champion?
• Is my athlete responding to a taper?
• Should I push the athlete harder or does he/she need a break?

Professor Allan Hahn, Head of the Department of Physiology at the AIS, has been attempting to answer these very practical questions for more than 20 years.

Historically, the collection of physiological and biomechanical data from athletes has occurred primarily in laboratory settings, because the equipment is not easily transferable to the field.

After a meeting in 1999 with Clive Davenport, the CEO of the CRC for microTechnology, Professor Hahn could immediately see how helpful small accurate microsensors could be for monitoring elite athletes in the field. A close relationship has been established between the CRC and the AIS that has recently resulted in the development of a number of prototype athlete monitoring devices under the auspices of CRC Project 2.5 – the AIS Project.

The cutting edge research and development work is made possible by drawing on the knowledge and core competencies from the CRC’s many other projects that aim to develop a toolbox of micro- and nano-scale techniques:

• rowing performance (a.k.a. “Rover”);
• swimming performance (a.k.a. “Traqua”);
• tracking team sports;
• boxing scoring and safety;
• athlete performance through force shoe monitoring.

“Rover” is the most advanced project and is being lauded by rowing coaches and athletes alike for the quality of real time information provided.

These are just a few examples of how technological innovation is changing sport. Add to that:

• the world’s most advanced swimming analysis (instrumented) 50-metre pool being built at the AIS in the next two years;
• software designed by former AIS staff and being trialled in the AIS gym that allows coaches to monitor and fine-tune strength and conditioning programs over the internet;
• a project that could allow more precise judging of sports that involve precise human movement, such as gymnastics and diving.

Virtual reality “games” being designed in association with the AIS Performance Psychology Department to improve skill acquisition and decision making, and

• a host of other projects that AIS won’t talk about because loose lips sink medals.

And you can see that “convergence” is a rapidly evolving reality that sports will ignore at their peril.
There’s science behind Australia’s sporting success – but there are challenges ahead

by John Bloomfield

Dr John Bloomfield has not only been an active and definitive actor in sports medicine and sports science issues. He has also been an extraordinary influence on the development of government support for and involvement in a process which has led Australia to its present status in world sport. In this extract from his book ‘Australia’s Sporting Success: The Inside Story’, he discusses the role of sports science and sports medicine in this success and offers suggestions for the way this role can be developed.

Australia is generally seen across the board as one of the top half dozen nations in the world in the field of sports science. This is particularly so in two areas: the methodology for infusing sports science into coaching techniques; and the efficiency with which Australian sports scientists have been able to identify talent and monitor training. This country is therefore seen as being able to apply sports science knowledge to sport performance, and this has been invaluable to its elite performers.

However, Australia has been less successful in contributing to the international body of knowledge in sports science. There is a general research malaise in Australia and sports science is only one of many fields which have been neglected.

A reasonable level of funding is required to significantly improve research and better coordination is needed between the various groups which contribute to the field.

This could be remedied by the establishment of an independent National Sports Science and Medicine Research Council, which would be best located in Canberra at the AIS. It could then act as a coordinating body with the AIS, the state and territory institutes or academies of sport, and the various university schools of human movement and exercise science, as well as with industry.

Australia’s closest sporting competitors in Europe are already allocating at least 5% of their sports budgets to research and development, which is two to three times more than Australia currently spends.

(The Council) must lobby hard to develop the field of microtechnology in sport. This new technology measures biological movement and exercise science, as well as with industry.

Sports medicine

Sports medicine in Australia has a very good international reputation, and this has resulted from the way in which knowledge in this field has been skillfully applied to Australian sportspersons and women, as Australian doctors practising in sports medicine are regarded as very competent practitioners.

However, sports medicine must not rest on its laurels, as it is not enough to only apply existing knowledge to the field. Little systematic research has been done in Australia, apart from the AIS Sports Science and Medicine Centre. The University of Western Australia, where Professors Fitch and Morton have been very productive, and Murdoch University, where Dr Barry Oakes has conducted some high-quality research. SMA needs to lobby the powers that be to improve Australia’s research output and to rectify this situation as soon as possible.

During the last 40 years, SMA has been a very positive contributor to the development of the Australian sports system. In its short history, its members have strongly supported many health initiatives and given caring treatment to a large number of Australians. SMA’s status in this country has never been higher and its lobbying capacity never greater.

It is important to acknowledge that the vast majority of the sports system’s current programs are functioning efficiently. Many of them have been in place for a long time and have served sport well; therefore, they should not be tampered with. There are social developments (e.g. changes in family structures, declining birth rate, decline in voluntary participation, increasing litigation, etc.) which might lead to a decrease in performance and participation levels in the future. However, if the following recommendations are introduced, they may counter these trends.

• Some children, because of their family structure, do not have as much access to sport as other young Australians. The federal and state governments should develop introductory programs through their sports organisations to help these children to experience both recreational and competitive sport.

• The reasons which have been given for the declining number of volunteers in sport (such as referees and umpires) have included: busy lifestyles; Australia’s ageing population; fear of abusive practices; and lack of insurance cover in case of litigation. Affirmative action will need to be taken, as the system cannot afford to lose coaches and officials at the current rate. Anecdotal evidence indicates that both these groups require more education and support so as to feel secure and confident to perform their roles. They also need to be covered by public risk insurance in case of litigation, something which is becoming much more common.

• Another issue is the number of sports administrators who have dropped out of sport, particularly since the introduction of the GST. It has been stated that not only are former club treasurers having problems with the complexity of the system but that secretaries have reported an increase in paperwork and claimed that their roles are not as enjoyable as it once was. It is important to acknowledge that the vast majority of the sports system’s current programs are functioning efficiently. Many of them have been in place for a long time and have served sport well; therefore, they should not be tampered with.

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**Low fitness – high obesity**

Australia has still not addressed in a systematic way the steady decline in fitness levels or the increase in obesity among the Australian population. Politicians, physical educators and some members of the medical profession have discussed this topic for at least 50 years, but no sustained educational program for children or adults has yet been established in an attempt to counteract these trends.

There are two possible solutions to this problem:

- State education departments should all be strongly encouraged to upgrade primary school health and physical education programs by providing trained health and physical education teachers in this specialist field. The debate as to whether this is possible or not from a financial viewpoint should cease, because Australian society cannot afford not to have it. With the rapidly escalating healthcare costs in recent years, the Federal Government must immediately act as a catalyst with the states to develop a preventive medical program.

- The Federal and State governments should develop a community health and fitness program which targets youth and adults and which is modelled on the successful Life Be It program of the last 1970s.

**Future funding**

In order to increase funding to cater for the fine-tuning of existing programs and to establish others mentioned earlier, additional sources of finance will need to be found. Unlike the Western European countries, Australia has never had a national lottery to assist in the funding of sport and culture, because state rights currently preclude this. The establishment of such a source of revenue would be a good solution, but is not a viable option for the immediate future. Therefore, urgent action should be taken to raise additional funding for various needy areas within the system. The total federal and state sport and fitness budgets must be topped up to a level which will enable Australia to function on equal terms with other Western democracies.

**The way forward?**

By and large, this nation’s sports system is running reasonably smoothly. However, Australia cannot rest on its laurels and need to act to shore up some of the small cracks which are starting to appear in the structure. The structural modifications and the additional funding mentioned above would improve the current system and would lead to the evolution of the next stage of the Australian sports system. It is important to remember that Australian sport has undergone a transformation over the past 200 years from a single localised amateur system to a highly centralised and professional one which is basically responsible for new performance standards in this country. Its development has become more complex as integrated its policies at both the federal and State levels. Australia’s sports system is now both widely admired and increasingly copied.

However, nothing ever stands still, especially when a more democratic process is embarked upon. In the future many new initiatives will evolve, bringing greater devolution, decentralisation and democracy to Australian sport. More responsibility and authority will be vested in the national sports organisations as well as the state or territory sport entities and there will be a greater focus on new ways to build grassroots participation. The next phase of the sports system’s evolution will be a more complex network of resources and expertise combined with a high degree of autonomy, but with a strong commitment to high standards.

This evolution should not be construed as a swing of the pendulum back to the unstructured amateur approach of the past. Nor is it about abandoning the gains this country has already made in terms of its investment in sport. Rather, the new way forward will be for the Federal Government, through the Australian Sports Commission, to play the role of a catalyst. What does this really mean? It means retaining a role not so much as a driver or controller of the system, but rather as a smart and strategic investor in it.

If Australia adopts the above approach, young Australians will continue to achieve at the elite level and, at the same time, the citizens of this nation will be able to use sport as a pathway to better personal health and wellbeing. By far the greatest problem facing the Olympic Movement is undoubtedly that of drugs in sport. They are banned for two very good reasons. One is harm done as a result of their side effects. The second is that taking performance-enhancing drugs is a form of deliberate cheating, and contrary to the sport and purpose of fair competition.

Sport was surely never intended to be a competition between guinea pigs who are doped by various pharmacological agents.

**Gene therapy: genie in the bottle**

The key to the future of many of the issues, such as the limits of human performance and the problems of drug cheats in sport, lies in the ever improving pace of scientific research. Recent advances in knowledge about genes and gene therapy have occurred at an unbelievable rate, and are revolutionising the future of medicine.

The huge scientific program known as the Human Genome Project was completed in the year 2000, five years ahead of schedule. The next big step is to develop a better understanding of, first, how the necessary instructions of genes work and, second, gene therapy.

Gene therapy is certainly the pathway to the future. Its importance in the field of medicine is that a normal gene may be substituted for an abnormal, faulty gene, so that some 4000 different diseases could potentially be cured.

Sadly, gene therapy is also very much the sports drug of the future, although the problem in sport is really not so much gene therapy as gene doping. It is the greatest problem facing sport medicine today, rendering drug testing as we know it obsolete. It will take many millions, maybe billions, of dollars to provide the technology to combat it. Even then testers will be playing catch-up with drug abusers.

Gene therapy could determine or alter the type of muscle fibres, increasing muscle bulk, with a large increase in muscular development and strength. Genetically modified fast twitch fibres in individual leg muscles could be targeted for use by sprinters. Distance runners could inject a different series of genes to increase the amount of oxygen carried in their blood, and so improve their stamina in a large amount.

Blood boosting is another good example. A difficult and cumbersome method to use, athletes found they could obtain the same effect by using EPO, injected three times a week. Better still, the gene responsible for EPO production, already identified by the Human Genome Project, can be injected and the body could become a factory churning out extra EPO. In addition, it will be undetectable by any means now known, as the EPO from the introduced gene will be identical to natural EPO. Other, indirect methods could possibly allow its detection but not the EPO gene itself.

Treatment of injuries will also be revolutionised. New ligaments and tendons could be grown and then made available for immediate treatment by replacing a ruptured one. But there is no truth in the rumour that ligaments or tendons ruptured in a match could be replaced at half-time and the player sent back on the field for the second half.

Gene therapy is going to play a major role in the future, probably even more than many people recognise. There will be dangers with its use.

How long before gene therapy becomes a major problem in sport? With it a few years in genetics.

There are some athletes out there now experimenting with gene therapy.

What should happen is that properly conducted scientific studies be carried out to determine how effective this treatment is and find out what the risks factors and side effects are.

Many people from different professional and sport medical backgrounds, and also those with a background in law and ethics, will be needed to sort out these questions, not least the being “Who will fund it?” Already experts and friends and admirers in all kinds of sport. In this extract, he discusses one of his great passions: the menace of doping in sport.

Drugs and Sport – and the genie in the bottle

By Brian Corrigan

Those involved in sport for a generation will tell you that Brian Corrigan is Dr Sport: doctor to Richie Benaud’s 1961 team, to Rale Rasic’s 1974 World Cup team, to five Olympic teams. In ‘The Life of Brian: Confessions of an Olympic Doctor’, he tells amazing tales of 30 years as a sports doctor at the elite level – and along the way shows why he has such a huge army of friends and admirers in all kinds of sport. This extract, he discusses one of his great passions: the menace of doping in sport.

Be In It

Sport & Health

ATHENS 2004

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THG: the latest menace

Just when some scientists thought that maybe, just maybe, they had got the scouge of anabolic steroids under control, along came THG (tetrahydrogestrinone). The whole furor exploded in 2000. In June, the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) received an anonymous tip from a track coach that several top athletes were using an undetectable anabolic steroid. To prove his point, he mailed a syringe containing THG.

THG is a designer steroid almost certainly used by elite sportspersons able to pay the excessive prices being charged on the black market. It was created from two other known steroids – trenbolone and gestrinone. The chemical modifications made THG undetectable in the usual tests for steroids. Cheating sports stars were able to take the steroid in liquid form by placing it under the tongue, allowing it to be quickly absorbed. This made it a lot more toxic on the liver than injectable anabolic steroids.

It wasn’t long before the drug cheats happened because someone gave the authorities the tip. Not only does no one know. The possible side effects of so many drugs that athletes are taking terrify me.

The last has not been heard of this THG. The authorities have the drug. Not only does no one know. The problems are unknown. The possible side effects of so many drugs that athletes are taking terrify me.

As a medical student at Sydney University, I had come directly in contact with Professor Frank Cotton, the professor of physiology. He had formed a group consisting mainly of students that became known as the ‘gongers pigs’. Professor Cotton was dubbed ‘The Father of Sports Science’ by the future Olympic swimming coach Forbes Carlile. After all, the Professor was the first person in Australia to take any interest in what we now know as sports medicine – although it was pretty basic stuff back then in the 1940s. Cotton had been a top-class swimmer, who had narrowly missed out on selection in the 4 x 200 metre relay team for the 1932 Paris Olympics. It was a great disappointment for Cotton because he was originally in the side but lost his spot when officials ordered a second selection swim. The team, headed by swimming legendBoyCharrton, won a silver medal.

The Professor was an interesting character, often regarded as eccentric, a real boffin. He worked out of a small, rudimentary laboratory, with very basic equipment.

But in so many respects, Frank Cotton was way before his time. He pioneered early attempts to introduce scientific methods into the pursuit of elite physical performances in sport, and especially in rowing and swimming. He also tried to devise methods to test fitness. Sadly, he was often perceived as doing too little more than taking someone’s pulse. And he had some rather weird ideas. I remember him one day asking me to increase my pulse rate.

How can I do that? I asked innocently.

‘Pretend you’re in a swimming pool and a hungry shark is coming for you,’ he suggested. Come again!

There was another incident I clearly recall. Cotton handed me a text book and noted, ‘There are a lot of mistakes in this book. Find out what they are. That’s the way you’ll learn what’s right.’

I often wonder what would have happened if I didn’t find the mistakes.

The speciality of sports medicine, linking my two great loves, did not exist in Australia when I first started out as a young doctor in 1953. It had a long tradition in Europe but did not commence here until the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, at which time the International Olympic Committee insisted such an organisation be formed. It was the forerunner of the Australian Sports Medicine Federation but based then only in the Victorian capital.

A small band of the enthusiasts included Les Cotton, nephew of Frank and a real chip off the old block, and myself started a sports medicine group in Sydney in 1957. It was later to join with the Melbourne organisation. Little did I know at the time what an enormous impact this would have on my life. Back then, however, we simply realised that doctors would eventually have to go overseas and study sports medicine, and I planned accordingly.

I planned my first visit to England to coincide with the 1961 Ashes cricket tour of the team led by Richie Benaud. By that time I had become quite involved with the NSW Sheffield Shield side in Sydney. This all came about by sheer luck. I had returned to my old country practice for a reunion one weekend in 1957. The visit coincided with a country cricket final. I was there watching the game. It was very hot and I was dressed only in a pair of shorts and sandals. The NSW Sheffield Shield selectors were there too, and I was asked if I could give them a lift back to their hotel. They were quite surprised when I told them I was studying to be a sports medicine specialist as I hardly looked the part in my casginar gear. But I got on well with them and they invited me along to a Sheffield Shield match in Sydney the following week. I wore a jack and tie this time.

The selectors eventually asked if I could do something about the fitness of the NSW players. That’s how my involvement with cricket at an elite level began.

ACSM 2004: Hot Topics from the Red Centre

ACSM 2004

Hot Topics from the Red Centre

SportHealth continues its foretaste of topics and happenings at the Australian Conference of Science and Medicine in Sport. In this Spring issue, more highlights from the speakers’ and symposia programs.

Dead Men Walking???

by Simon Bartold

So what is going on in the wonderful world of feet, lower limbs and human movement? Well since I now spend a large part of my life in airports travelling to sports medicine and biomechanics conferences around the world, maybe I can highlight some of the most interesting research from around the globe relating to the lower limb, as well as some thoughts on current projects with which I am involved.

From a podiatrist and lower limb biomechanics point of view, there is intense interest in the functioning of athletic footwear and devices. Podiatry in particular is being forced to make some pretty rapid adjustments to old paradigms that clearly are not holding up to scientific scrutiny.

For many years, sports podiatrists have clung to a particular theory explaining the functioning of the foot and lower limb, and outlining a criterion for ‘normalcy’ of lower limb biomechanics. This theory was based on the work of three US based podiatrists, Root, Weed and Oriente, and their thoughts, first published in the 1970s, were rapidly to become the cornerstone on which a million orthoses were built.

It is really important to not diminish the theories of Root, Weed and Oriente, because their work was and remains extremely important to this day. But it is equally important to recognise that a theory is all it is and, today, basing treatment protocols on a theory is maybe not good enough.

Root theory, as it has become known, (no sniggering please) has provided an excellent basis for further research, and it from these early concepts we are now achieving a much better understanding of foot and leg function, which ultimately will present better and more varied treatment options for lower limb biomechanical deficits.

Orthoses: how do they work?

There is little question at all that orthotic devices work. The big and as yet unanswerable question is… how do they work? This question as relates to orthotic therapy are ‘What kind of orthoses offers the athlete the best result?’ And are custom built orthoses, fabricated from a cast of the athlete’s foot, any better than prefabricated devices?

Well, the jury is out, but there is some compelling evidence to suggest that prefab devices may function just as effectively as cast orthoses (Payne et al. AJPM 2001;36,1:7-12, Landorf J SCI Med Sport 2003; 6,4, 103).

How do orthoses function? Well, again we do not know but the presumed mechanical action of an orthotic device may not be as important as we first thought. It seems very likely that orthoses are able to offer functional support to a biomechanically challenged foot. Perhaps they are even able to affect joint position, or more importantly joint moments.

However, the proprioceptive effect of orthoses has been underemphasised and under-researched. Likewise, the ability of orthoses to influence psychophysical feedback loops, muscle vibration harmonics (working on the assumption that, like almost everything that vibrates, muscle has a harmonic at which it will function normally and a harmonic frequency at which it may contribute to injury), and lower limb stiffness are all under-investigated.

So what is being done to quantify these vexatious issues? Some of the most innovative research is coming out of a collaborative study from the University of Salford in the UK and Iowa State University in the US (near to where the potatoes come from).

Implementing the spring

In a project with the rather macabre working title of ‘Dead men walking’, the team has for the first time been able to describe the movements of the individual bones of the foot using a cadaver foot and leg that literally walks across a room.
Sports Injury in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities – A Priority Problem

by Caroline Finch

Sport and active recreation activities are an important component of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lifestyles. As with all Australians, participation in such activities has many benefits, but there can still be a risk of injury. The voices from ATSI communities tell us that safety during sporting activities is a concern for their members(1-3). These injuries do not just affect the individual concerned, but can have serious implications for the whole community. Injuries, such as those associated with sport, can have a ripple down effect, particularly if they occur to the main income provider. A loss of income can lead to poor self-esteem, psychological distress and them translates into larger problems for ATSI communities.

As an injury epidemiologist, I am well aware of the excess burden that injuries place on ATSI communities. For example, the rate of road trauma is much higher in ATSI Australians, rather than in non-ATSI populations(4). There are also higher rates of intentional injuries, including suicides and homicides, in ATSI populations(5). This has led the Commonwealth Government(6), and many of the State Health Departments(eg, 7), to invest considerable efforts in understanding the nature of the injury problem in ATSI communities.

As a sports injury epidemiologist, I am often asked about how common sports injuries are in ATSI groups. This prompted me to look at the issue of ATSI sports injury in some detail and to propose a session on ATSI sport and injury for the 2014 Australian Conference of Science and Medicine in Sport.

Unfortunately, the quantification of sports injury risk in ATSI Australians does not come with a ready answer. There is very little, if any, empirical evidence to describe the incidence of sports injuries among ATSI populations in Australia. Part of this relates to the relative poor capabilities of existing data systems to identify aboriginality routinely. Another factor has been the inability of data systems based on ICD coding, at least until the recent introduction of ICD-10-AM codes, to identify sports injury cases. In this respect, the ATSI sports injury problem is the same as the non-ATSI one – severely underestimated because of the lack of available data.

There is very little, if any, empirical evidence to describe the incidence of sports injuries in ATSI populations in Australia.

In an extensive search of electronic bibliographic databases, I could only identify one study that specifically looked at adverse outcomes of sport participation in ATSI groups and this related to Aboriginal sport outcomes. I discussed the incidence of sudden death due to ischaemic heart disease(8). The study found a rate of 19.24 ischaemic heart disease-related sudden cardiac deaths per 100,000 player years in Aboriginal Australian Football players in the Northern Territory, compared to a rate of 0.54 per 100,000 player years in Victoria. The authors recommended the development of culturally appropriate long-term intervention strategies to prevent such incidents in the future.

It is to the ATSI communities themselves that we need to go to get the richest source of sports injury information. As noted by Clarkham(9), sports safety is a concern recognised by local groups and one touted as requiring preventive actions.

However, only one sports injury intervention, the Northern Territory’s Strong Indigenous Safer Sports Program, was referenced in Clarkham’s in her extensive review of ATSI injury prevention programs(7).

A number of recurrent themes emerge from ATSI groups(1-3). All recognise the problem as being particularly relevant to their male members and relate it to participation in contact sports, such as the football codes, and to other team sports such as netball. They also recognise the impact that alcohol use/abuse has on injury risk and general activities surrounding sports events, such as post-game drinking. In the words of a Shoolhaven Aboriginal community member: “alcohol consumption, often not by the injured party, contributes significantly to sport and leisure injuries(3).” This serves to demonstrate that the factors surrounding any injury in an ATSI community can be complex and often related to other factors such as alcohol use in the broader context of sport delivery and transport options.

A related issue is the broader socioeconomic context of ATSI communities, leading to inadequate resources (both financial and in terms of appropriate people being) available to deliver safe sport. Few people can afford personal protective equipment or training programs to provide minimum standards of first aid treatment and coaching at games. It would seem that the potential for injury risks associated with problems such as the volunteer nature of sport, the lack of trained personnel, poor quality sports facilities and sub-standard playing conditions in rural Australia(10) are all heightened in ATSI populations, even in those residing in more urbanised areas.

This ingenious model is used to measure the kinematics of all five metatarsals and three cuneiforms, plus the navicular, cuboid, calcaneus, talus and tibia during the same walking cycle. The somewhat bizarre spectacle of a cadaver foot and leg moving across a room, apparently under its own steam, is achieved via forces applied to nine leg muscle using motors. In this way, the simulation data very closely resemble that collected during in vivo trials. Research of this calibre allows us to look at segmental foot and leg movement, as well as bone and joint movement, plus kinetics under the physiologic load of gait.

This along with in vivo bone pin studies, which ethically are only permitted in Sweden, is the gold standard in understanding the function of the foot during gait. As this research progresses, it seems likely a clear understanding of orthotic therapy and recent trends in athletic footwear.

In addition, the research tells us that, for efficient and injury free running, it was essential that the messages from the tiny nerve endings on the sole of the foot be transmitted unimpeded to the brain, in the process we call proprioception.

And all along, the athlete identified as an overpronator was enduring a shoe offering a jelly, inflexible and harbored sole. Contact phase pronation was negate at the cost of reduced shock attenuation; proprioception was blunted by excessively heavy and inflexible footwear.

The ride suffered, the science suffered… The athlete suffered.

Asic’s revolutionary concept

Then in 2002, Asics introduced a revolutionary concept: that motion control, is now accepted by all the manufacturers and retailers. This new paradigm, ‘motion control’, is based on what the science tells us.

For the last 20 years, pathological footwear, especially running shoes, have been prescribed for overpronators. These are people who have increased rearfoot eversion and pronation and block off the perceived ‘negative’ motion. A more flexible and lightweight footwear has been prescribed in an effort to make the wearer run more normally. This also has the advantage of being less harsh ride. Contact phase pronation should be transmitted with minimal interruption.

So there are just a few of the exciting developments in more flexible and lightweight shoes. There is much more to tell… but that is for next time.

Simon Bylhold is Research Fellow, University of South Australia, and Asics International Research Coordinator.

Technology is the other thing to watch out for:

• new materials that are very light, completely waterproof but completely breathable, ideal for wet-weather sports like Aussie Rules or rugby.

• ‘smart’ foams that are capable of conforming to the foot’s morphology, improving fit and reducing friction but completely without memory, that is, they completely reform to their original shape when not in use.

• finally, midsole technology that adapts to the individual touch-down position of the athlete, allowing a recognition of the variation from runner to runner and, especially, finally allowing for the differences in gait pattern between men and women.

For the last 20 years, pathological athletic footwear in the hope that this bland diet of heavy and very stiff overpronators have been prescribed. But there was a problem: the science was telling us that contact phase pronation was normal, in fact that contact phase pronation was important, and an essential part of the shock attenuation process at heel strike. The science was telling us that, to block off this normal motion, to control this motion, was not only extremely difficult but also highly counterproductive. The heavy and inflexible midsole also interfered with windlass mechanics and made efficient propulsion that much more difficult. In addition, the research told us that, for efficient and injury free running, it was essential that the messages from the tiny nerve endings on the sole of the foot be transmitted unimpeded to the brain, in the process we call proprioception.

The thought behind the shift towards more flexible and lightweight footwear is based on what the science tells us. For the last 20 years, pathological overpronators have been prescribed a bland diet of heavy and very stiff footwear. Contact phase pronation was negate at the cost of reduced shock attenuation; proprioception was blunted by excessively heavy and inflexible footwear.

The ride suffered, the science suffered… The athlete suffered.

Asic’s revolutionary concept

Then in 2002, Asics introduced a revolutionary concept: that motion control should not be controlled, but that athletic footwear should enhance normal foot function, that normal contact phase pronation should be encouraged, and that the messages from the foot to the brain must be transmitted with minimal interruption.

This new paradigm, ‘motion enhancement rather than motion control’, is now accepted by all the major footwear manufacturers and the consumer can expect to see a global swing toward much more responsive athletic footwear.
Sports and Osteoarthritis

by Peter Brukner and David Baxter

Osteoarthritis (OA) or degenerative joint disease is the progressive destruction of the articular cartilage surface from bones within the joint space through wear and tear and inflammation.\(^1\) The loss of articular cartilage is accompanied by attempted repair, remodelling and subchondral bone sclerosis. Ultimately this leads to erosion of the bone with the effect that movement of the joint is associated with bone rubbing on bone causing pain to the patient. These joint changes may be accompanied by osteophytic lipping, development of marginal osteophytes, bone cysts and oedema within bone, which can be imaged to some degree with plain x-ray and MRI.

Commonly, OA is divided into two classifications: primary and secondary OA. Whereas primary OA occurs insidiously with an idiopathic causation, secondary OA generally occurs in the presence of or response from some underlying causative factor, such as metabolic, anatomic, major trauma or surgery, or an inflammatory disorder. It is interesting to note that the presence of any of these factors is not indicative of future OA development, nor is it a requirement for the development of OA from any of these comorbidities. Clinical symptoms and signs include pain, restriction of range of movement (ROM), crepitation, joint effusions and deformity. Does sport lead to osteoarthritis? The answer to this question like so many issues in medicine is not simple and appears to vary among different populations and different sports. To try and find a way through the myriad of studies and conflicting results, it is helpful to divide the evidence up into a number of categories based on the amount and type of exercise performed.

Running

There is little evidence that a moderate amounts of running leads to the development of osteoarthritis in those with normal joints. Sutton and colleagues (2003) investigated knee OA in low to moderate physical activity through the Allied Dunbar National Fitness Survey. Inclusion criteria were set by way of diagnostic and symptomatic affirmatives, and age and sex matched controls were assigned. Despite the heavy possibility that male subjects may be over-represented based on increased participation in high impact sports, there appeared to be no significant difference in between the active and control subjects when it came to the development of OA. Buckwalter (2003) documents several studies that assess 60-year-old runners with age-matched controls who had exercised 180 minutes per week for 12 years. The results indicate no higher level of significant difference in the occurrence of OA. In previous years, Konradi and colleagues (1990) and Panush and Brown (1987) both found no contributory evidence to suggest that running as an exercise sport and leads to OA later in life. Furthermore Panush and Brown report that normal activity in sport with the joint working through a normal ROM in the absence of joint abnormality even over many years need not lead to OA and joint injury. However, animal studies have demonstrated that sheep walking upon a concrete floor for four hours per day displayed signs and symptoms of OA as little as nine months (Radin et al 1979, cited in Eichner 1980).\(^2\) Substantial evidence that would suggest regular sports participation at a recreational level does not cause OA has been published by Lane and colleagues (1986, 1993, 1998). These papers document a prospective cohort of subjects from a distance running club. The level of activity differs from the elite running levels reported in many other papers. With 41 subjects, age ranging from 50-72 years old, cross matched with controls for several factors, Lane et al’s results have demonstrated essentially no difference in OA progression in the knee across all follow-up’s and all groups. The only predictor detected for disease progression was the baseline radiographic score and a faster running pace per mile.

But what about the more serious runner who is running faster and further?\(^3\) One study by Marti (1989) compared the development of radiographic OA in long distance runners compared to bobsledders riders and controls who found a 19% incidence in the runners and none in the two other groups. Spector (1990) found significantly higher levels of significant difference in OA in former elite female middle and long distance runners compared with elite female tennis players and controls.

High Impact and torsional loading

The only causative requirement agreed upon is the impact of activity with high impact and torsional loading in the presence of an abnormally-aligned joint or with abnormal biomechanics may lead to joint degeneration and OA.\(^4\) Several papers have assessed the occurrence of OA in elite male athletes who had represented Finland between 1920 and 1965. This cohort of subjects has offered a unique retrospective insight into the factors that may play a role in the aetiology of OA in the absence of any major

\(^1\) Carter Products
\(^2\) Adidas
\(^3\) Pedikom NZ
\(^4\) Impedimed
\(^5\) Biocel
\(^6\) Gal Bros Medical
\(^7\) Gull Bore Medical
sporting injury, trauma or surgery to the joint. The results demonstrated that relative risk of OA of the hip, knee and ankle was 2.37-2.68 across three sports classifications – endurance, mixed sports and power sports (Kujala, 1994).

Kettunen and colleagues (2001) propose a higher incidence in knee pain from team sports participants when compared with former track and field athletes. Other degenerative factors for the development of OA include a positive correlation with increased BMI. Moreover, somewhat controversially, the participation in sport is related to an increased risk of knee OA, whereas sports participation appears to be protective against hip OA.

Drewer and Fuller (2003) conducted a self-administered questionnaire of 185 former English professional footballers. Retirement in nearly half of the respondents was due to either an acute or chronic injury. Interestingly, 59 (32%) subjects had been misdiagnosed with OA in at least one of the lower limb joints, with the knee joint achieving the highest incidence. This number is in accordance with Turner et al (2000) where subjects were allocated into an OA group and document injuries limited to the almost impossible task to diagnose to major joint trauma, injury or damage to the articular cartilage. Certainly there is ample evidence that meniscal and ACL injuries are associated with an increased incidence of OA.

Our own study (Deacon et al, 1997) looked at a group of 50 retired professional Australian footballers and compared their radiographic and functional scores to age-matched controls. While there was an increased risk of developing knee OA in the footballers, the risk was dramatically increased if the player had sustained a knee injury of any sort and particularly a meniscal or ACL injury. Further findings by Turner et al (2000) concerned the increased likelihood that former professional footballers have a higher incidence of OA of the hip joint when compared with the general public. Moreover, the subjects with OA of the hip had no past history of acute injury or surgery to the joint.

Injury

It seems clear that playing high impact torsional sports such as the various football codes is associated with an increased risk of developing OA. The next question is then whether this is due to the repetitive stresses on the joints or to the fact that these sports are associated with a high incidence of joint injuries, many of which may lead directly or indirectly to damage to the articular cartilage. Certainly there is ample evidence that meniscal and ACL injuries are associated with an increased incidence of OA.

Our own study (Deacon et al, 1997) looked at a group of 50 retired professional Australian footballers and compared their radiographic and functional scores to age-matched controls. While there was an increased risk of developing knee OA in the footballers, the risk was dramatically increased if the player had sustained a knee injury of any sort and particularly a meniscal or ACL injury.

Risk factors

Buckwalter (2003) contends that measureless variability between individuals may mean that those predisposed to degenerative joint disease through genetics, joint shape, congruence, stability, muscle strength, body mass, innervation and other factors may develop the disease after minimal participation in activity when compared with another subject.

Consideration of OA, being secondary to major joint trauma, injury or surgery, is potentially skewed due to the almost impossible task to diagnose and document injuries limited to the articular cartilage or subchondral bone. Bearing in mind that articular cartilage lacks pain innervation, unrecognised joint injury may account for some degree of the idiopathic aetiology of OA and the development of OA after a career in sport without the recollection or documentation of any significant joint injury.

Apart from injury, there are a number of other potential risk factors for the development of OA following sporting activity. These include genetically determined abnormalities of articular cartilage, biomechanical abnormalities, joint dysplasia, muscle weakness, neurologic deficits and increased weight.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is safe to say that moderate sporting activity in participants with normal joints and normal biomechanics does not lead to an increased incidence of OA. However repetitive torsional activities would appear to be associated with OA development, particularly if a significant joint injury involving damage to the articular cartilage occurs.

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Measurement of body size and shape in human movement has traditionally been done with girth tapes, anthropometers and skinfold calipers. In the late 1980s the first 3D whole-body scanners were developed. Today the availability of reliable 3D whole-body scanners and software/hardware suites capable of rapid measurement extraction and analysis has the potential to revolutionise surface anthropometry.

The main driver behind 3D scanning has been the apparel industry, envisaging the possibility of ‘garments on demand’, tailored to fit each individual perfectly. 3D body scans are fed into software which extracts critical clothing dimensions, as it were ‘peeling the surface’ of the 3D scans and laying it flat to form clothing patterns. Linked to computerised fabric cutters, the process has the potential to reduce costs and delivery time and to improve fit.

3D scanning has parallel applications in human factors, where humanoid “manikins” can be rescaled using measurements extracted from 3D scans and animated to interact with the built environment. These techniques are already being employed in military contexts and in the design of mass transportation and workplaces. A large project currently being undertaken by the University of South Australia, the Australian Sports Commission, the University of Ballarat and engineering firm Sinclair Knight Merz aims to scan RAARF aircrew and planes and rescue and animate manikins to see whether they can fit and perform critical tasks comfortably in crevassation.

In health research, 3D scanning has been used for craniofacial and reconstructive surgery and for prosthetic manufacture (where the undamaged limb is scanned and a mirror image produced for the damaged side). The same techniques have been applied to forensic and anthropological reconstruction based on skeletal remains and fossils. Graphic designers use 3D scanning to create computer “avatars”, animated human-like figures in video games and simulation scenarios. Many of the special effects in the Terminator movies were created using the Cyberware whole-body scanner.

Much work has been done on facial recognition and judgments of attractiveness using manipulated 3D facial scans.

However, very little work has been done using 3D scanner in sports science applications. The aim of our paper is to outline some possible applications of 3D scanning technology in exercise-related areas.

How 3D scanners work

Scanners use a variety of technical means to create 3D images. Most work by projecting straight lines or grids on to the human body. They are distorted by the curves and contours of the body. This distortion is captured by cameras and decoded to infer the 3D shape. 3D scanners produce a dense “point cloud” in three-dimensional space. A body scan usually consists of several hundred thousand points, each represented by an XYZ co-ordinate. Sometimes these points are joined to their near neighbours to form polygonal meshes (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Human figure in a cycling posture. The file uses a polygonal mesh. The tiny facets formed by the polygonal mesh can be shaded and smoothed, producing a “rendered” body (Figure 2, the metaphor is that of a plasterer smoothing render over a wire frame).
Manipulating 3D data

The great advances in 3D scanning in the last 10 years has made the process not so much from hardware developments as from software techniques. Some specific techniques are of particular interest for sports science because they imply new applications:

- ‘Morphing’ involves combining images, so that the resultant image is a mix of the two in different proportions. ‘Averaging’ involves creating an image which is a composite of a number of images, to create a topological or average body. ‘Caricaturisation’ involves quantifying the difference between two bodies (or composite bodies) and exaggerating them. If, for example, one person has longer legs than average, the caricaturised form of his body will have extremely long legs. ‘Anti-caricatures’ work the opposite way — they reduce the differences between two bodies or composite bodies.

Applications to sports science

The possibility of digitising the body shapes of athletes’ bodies offers some interesting new potentials for sports science. This section outlines some examples.

Projected frontal area

Projected frontal area (Ap) is the plane a cyclist, swimmer or runner presents perpendicular to his or her direction of motion. It is the major determinant of air resistance, and hence the major source of resistance to forward motion, at typical movement speeds. If Ap is minimised, the athlete will be able to move faster. Ap is usually measured by taking photographs beside a reference dimension and using manual planimetry. For each new body position and orientation, the athlete has to be repositioned and photographed again. By representing an athlete’s body in a sports posture (Figure 1), either by scanning him in that posture or by rescaling a manikin in a modelling program, this process can be facilitated and refined.

A cyclist can, for example, be tilted while maintaining the same posture, simulating the effect of changing the geometry of the bicycle frame. The effect on Ap can be measured at each angle. In animation program, posture can also be modified. 3D models of cyclists and other athletes moving through a fluid medium (composites) can also be used to model flow dynamics and hence reduce air resistance in other ways.

Volumes

The calculation of limb volumes and partial volumes has been important in sports science to calculate moments of inertia for biomechanics research and to estimate muscle mass in relation to power output in sprint cyclists and the like. In the past, limb volumes have been estimated by plethysmography (immersion in fluid, usually water, and measuring displacement), or by taking surface measurements and using a simplified model (eg, assuming that limb cross-sectional areas are elliptical). 3D anthropometry allows a much more precise calculation of limb volumes, because cross-sectional areas (CSAs) and volumes can be calculated.

An extension of the use of 3D analysis to calculate volumes is to use it to calculate whole-body volume and hence to estimate percentage body fat. If we know the mass of the subject and the volume estimated by 3D scanning, we can calculate the whole-body density and hence estimate percentage body fat. To our knowledge, no study has yet looked at the accuracy and precision of using 3D scans to predict percentage body fat, measured against a criterion standard such as DXA or hydrostatic weighing. However, the US Soldier Center at Natick has reported that 3D scans yield accurate estimates of whole-body surface area.

3D characterisation of athletes

There has been extensive research into how athletes differ morphologically (ie, in body shape) from their source populations (the populations from which they are recruited; Norton, Olds, Olive and Craig, 1990). Averaging can be used to characterise body shapes from the general population, and from sports groups. The variability in the location, shape and size of body parts can then be calculated. Caricaturisation techniques help us to visualise and understand the three-dimensional distinctiveness of sporting bodies. These differences can then be statistically analysed to see which represent significant variability and which those which may be due to typical inter-subject variation. These results can then be used for talent identification and recruitment.

Statistical techniques such as clustering analysis and Principal Components Analysis, coupled with shape-analysis (or “morphometric”) strategies, are being used to develop general human shape classifications, more refined and more soundly based than traditional somatotypes.

Body changes due to growth, maturation, dietary and training interventions

3D scanning can be used to visualise (perhaps using morphing) and better quantify size and shape changes that occur due to ageing and training. These may be used to monitor athletic groups, but also to quantify shape changes for example in abdominal adiposity with ageing.

Conclusion

For a long time, anthropometry has been in the doldrums. After the post- war revival of sports anthropometry by researchers such as Lindsay Carter, there has been a long period of stagnation, as evidenced by declining publications, particularly in key journals. 3D scanning offers the opportunity to renew and revitalise sports anthropometry.

Tim Olds and Mike Rogers are at the Centre for Applied Anthropometry, University of South Australia

References


Craig, N, Norton K, Olds T, Olive S and Tim Olds and Mike Rogers are at the Centre for Applied Anthropometry, University of South Australia

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end of their playing days – even to the extent of having many, if not all teeth replaced with implants. This is not an option for many community-level players. There is a concern that the availability of such ‘fix-up’ options may lead to a more cavalier approach to dental safety at the elite level.

The most extreme manifestation of the negative story, and like the entertainment business, those that get the most publicity, are those about athletes and coaches resorting to illegal performance-enhancing substances – drug scandals. Allegations of this kind made about some members of the Australian Olympic cycling team received massive publicity just prior to the Games. All involved must still feel shaken by the experience. And this despite subsequent exoneration and gold medal triumphs. How much publicity did the Anderson Report and its subsequent exoneration of the team members, finding the accuser’s word could not ‘be safely accepted or acted upon’ actually receive? Compared to the initial accusations, virtually none.

Such stories get far more publicity than positive stories about how science and medicine are used legitimately to get the best out of an athlete. The article from the AIS in this edition of Sport Health is a rare example of the latter. Sensation and scandal are the bread and butter of the entertainment business. It is a given that information about reduced injury rates and improved recovery regimes will get nothing like the same publicity.

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The Final 8 concept is uniquely Australian. Just as our favourite horse race, the Melbourne Cup, is a handicap event with a premium on a close finish, our football competitions are obsessed with providing entertainment value in the finals rather than necessarily selecting the best team of the year. The Australian approach to football finals lies somewhere between the contrasting perspectives taken by the British and American systems. In the UK, the major football competition, Premier League Soccer, is decided by a simple first past the post system, with the team having the most number of points being declared the winner without finals being required. An exception to the status quo in England is the Rugby Super League, which has a final six that is somewhat similar to Australian systems. Soccer in Europe has a variety of alternatives to this knock out type finals systems, with the final 8 sorting themselves out in knockout quarter finals, in a similar fashion to tennis. All of the major American sports also follow the knockout quarter final approach to their list, although it is worth noting that baseball, basketball and ice hockey all have multi-game playoffs, which reduces the likelihood that a poor team can knock out a superior one with a single upset win. The NFL has close to the most brutal (but perhaps therefore the most exciting) of all playoff systems in the football world, with a 16 match regular season being decided by a knockout finals system with no double chance, meaning that a team could be undefeated in the regular season but fail to make the final four if they lost one playoff game. The major Australian football competitions – AFL and ARL – will both persist with a final 8 playoff system in the foreseeable future, because both of them need the revenue and the TV product, and for the side effect of making the home and away seasons more exciting. Although the NRL currently has 15 teams and the AFL 16 teams, both have a compromised home and away season in which teams do not have a balanced set of fixtures against all opponents. In the NRL, stand-downs associated with the State of Origin series further compromises the fairness of the regular season. Therefore both AFL and NRL administrators would be justified in wanting to have a fairly ‘open’ finals series to allow for the inconsistencies of the home and away seasons.
The NRL currently uses the McIntyre Final 8 system, designed by Victorian lawyer Ken McIntyre, who is also credited with designing the original AFL finals system (as a student in the 1930s), final 5 system (in the early 1970s) and final 6 system (in the early 1990s). All of his systems have been tested so that the higher finishing teams have had an advantage over those beneath them (including receiving a ‘double chance’ after a loss early in the finals). However, in his final 8 system the double chance from the first week for teams 4–6 depends on the results of other games. This anomaly led to the AFL abandoning the system in the year 2000, although to be fair to the McIntyre system, some of the perceived injustices of the system were caused by the AFL’s contract with the MCG that a certain number of finals must be played at that ground.

The most notable bizarre outcome under the McIntyre system in the AFL was the Adelaide Crows winning the Premiership in 1998 after they finished fifth and were thrashed in the first week (and after which they probably didn’t deserve, but did receive a ‘double chance’). Personally I feel the most glaring let-down under the McIntyre system was the fact that Essendon were clearly the dominant team of the 1999 season, but they lost a knockout Preliminary Final by a point to Carlton and didn’t even get to reach the Grand Final. This anomaly could still occur under the new AFL finals system, by the way.

The NRL now uses the McIntyre system, although there is constant debate that this system must be shelved in favour of the AFL system, which although it bears no specific name is actually a double-final four system (based on the original Page-McIntyre design). The NRL has also looked at an alternate system submitted by media commentator Warren Ryan, which is included in this review. I don’t think the Warren Ryan system is a viable one, as teams 4 and 5 both play a match in week 1 (not against each other) and irrespective of any results, both progress to a knockout semi in week 2, which would give them no incentive to try to win their week 1 match. Also included in this review is a system designated the ‘Wildcard’ system, which differs from the alternatives in that it more highly favours the minor premiers. Although an interesting concept, the wildcard system is unlikely ever to be adopted because of its complexity.

A further point of note regarding the AFL and NRL finals systems is the importance of home ground advantage. In the NRL system currently, home ground advantage is only offered to higher placed teams during the first week of the finals. In the AFL, home ground advantage is offered in theory during the first three weeks, although the AFL must reserve the right to rescind home ground advantage on occasion in order to fulfill a contract it holds with the MCC. Studies of home ground advantage show that it definitely exists and is mainly influenced by crowd support. It is controversial as to whether referee bias (due to crowd reaction) is a major component, or whether the home crowd vocal support lifts the players without major help from the umpires. In situations where teams must travel across multiple time zones, jet lag may also influence home ground advantage, but this is unlikely to be relevant in Australian competitions.

Specifically, local ground knowledge and short-haul travel are not considered to be nearly as important as crowd support. The evidence for this is mainly based on the American national competitions, where home field advantage is greatest in basketball and least in baseball. In baseball, the court conditions are exactly the same in every stadium, but the crowd noise is massive due to small enclosed conditions. In baseball, the field size, grass types, stadium conditions all vary significantly, and the home team is given the advantage of bat swinging, but the crowd influence is less than other sports because the seats are further away from the players.

Therefore, although the NRL and AFL Grand Finals are played in Sydney and Melbourne respectively, there is very little home ground advantage as both are played in front of sell-out crowds with many neutral supporters who would be willing to support an underdog. Early finals between two teams from different states would have the potential to lead to a significant home ground advantage. However, the advantage would vary depending on the amount of support the away team has in the foreign city and even the stadium configuration. For example, the Sydney Swans would probably have a greater home ground advantage at the SCG, where the fans are closer to the players and the noise is retained more, than Telstra Stadium, where the fans are more distant.

A comparison chart is also provided listing the likelihood that each team will win the competition, based on a theoretical 50% winning likelihood for the highest placed teams in week 1, and then a 50% winning likelihood (for simplicity) for all games after week 1. From the comparisons provided, the fairest finals system is the Wildcard system, but it suffers from complexity.

The AFL system is probably the next best and fairest and has the major advantage of simplicity. Its major disadvantage is that it doesn’t reward team 1 enough. The McIntyre system exchanges fairness with a week 1 lottery that is highly exciting and, if that is the way that administrators want to flavour their finals, it is a reasonable option. I don’t like the way that a team must rely on other results to avoid elimination in week 1, but it does keep everyone on the edge of their seats. The Warren Ryan system is an attempt to make the McIntyre system fairer, but it devalues the week 1 games far too much.

Despite the debates, it is likely that both the AFL and NRL will continue with their current systems, and both competitions probably like the fact that more publicity is created by the debate over which is the best system.

### Quarter Finals System:

**WEEK 1**

- **QF1:** Team 1 v Team 8
- **QF2:** Team 2 v Team 7
- **QF3:** Team 3 v Team 6
- **QF4:** Team 4 v Team 5

**WEEK 2**

- **SF1:** Winner QF1 v Winner QF4
- **SF2:** Winner QF 2 v Winner QF3

**WEEK 3**

- **PF1:** Highest ranking winner (from week 1) v winner SF2
- **PF2:** 2nd highest ranking winner (from week 1) v winner SF1

**WEEK 4**

- **GF:** Winner PF1 v Winner PF2

### Double Final Four (AFL) System:

**WEEK 1**

- **QF1:** Team 4 v Team 5
- **QF2:** Team 6 v Team 7
- **QF3:** Team 1 v Team 8
- **QF4:** Team 2 v Team 3

**WEEK 2**

- **SF1:** Loser QF1 v Winner EF1
- **SF2:** Loser QF 2 v Winner EF2
- **SF3:** Loser QF 3 v Winner EF3
- **SF4:** Loser QF 4 v Winner EF4

**WEEK 3**

- **PF1:** Winner EF1 v Winner SF2
- **PF2:** Winner EF2 v Winner SF1

**WEEK 4**

- **GF:** Winner PF1 v Winner PF2

### McIntyre Final 8 System:

**WEEK 1**

- **QF1:** Team 1 v Team 8
- **QF2:** Team 2 v Team 7
- **QF3:** Team 3 v Team 6
- **QF4:** Team 4 v Team 5

**WEEK 2**

- **SF1:** 3rd highest ranking winner v highest ranking loser
- **SF2:** 4th highest ranking winner v highest ranking loser

**WEEK 3**

- **PF1:** Highest ranking winner (from week 1) v winner SF2
- **PF2:** 2nd highest ranking winner (from week 1) v winner SF1

**WEEK 4**

- **GF:** Winner PF1 v Winner PF2

### Comparison of winning percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYSTEM</th>
<th>QUARTER FINALS</th>
<th>MCINTYRE (NRL SYSTEM)</th>
<th>DOUBLE FOUR SYSTEM (AFL)</th>
<th>WARREN RYAN SYSTEM</th>
<th>WILDCARD SYSTEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 3</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 4</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 6</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 7</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 8</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

- **Top even**
  - Good distribution but random outcomes
  - Good reward for top 4 but big gap between teams 4 and 5.

**Very fair distribution but week 1 games are decided**

- Best reward for team one.
just as health is more than simply the absence of disease; physical health goes beyond morbidity and mortality measures. Physical activity and exercise play a role in establishing and maintaining positive mood (Hansem, Stevens and Coast, 2001, Steinberg et al, 1998), may enhance some aspects of cognitive functioning in older adults (Emery, Schein, Hauck and MacIntyre, 1998, Kramer et al, 1999) assist in the development of positive self-concept and self-esteem (McAuley, Blosser, Katala, Duncan and Mihaklo, 2000; McAuley, Mihalko and Bane, 1997), and improve perceptions of overall quality of life (Rejeski and Mihaklo, 1993).

Although current evidence generally supports the positive role of physical activity and exercise in depression, anxiety reduction, mood, self esteem, cognitive function and quality of life, this relationship is likely both curvilinear and contextual. Research in athletic populations has shown depressed mood and psychological distress may result from high volumes and/or intensity of training (Armstrong and Vanheest, 2002, Filaire, Bernain, Sagnol and Lac, 2001, O'Connor, Morgan, Raglin, Barksdale and Kalian, 1989).

In terms of activity context, there is recent evidence to show that people exercising in a competitive setting report less favourable affective responses than do people completing their exercise in a non-competitive setting (Masters, Lacalle and Shearer, 2003). Of course, energy expenditure in the context of sport participation has vast implications for psychological health and wellbeing – potentially either positive or negative – which is beyond the scope of this brief review.

A major challenge for the health profession is to promote physical activity among the inactive majority of the population. There is, however, a small portion of the population that display an unhealthy dependency on physical activity. This addictive behaviour can cause individuals to exercise at the cost of injury, loss of interpersonal relationships and detrimental work performance (Coen and Ogles, 1995, Yates, 1987). Although sometimes serious at the individual level, it is generally considered that the benefits of physical activity at the population level far outweigh the possible detrimental effects of its potentially addictive nature (Sallis and Owen, 1999).

In conclusion, evidence generally supports the positive contribution of moderate levels of physical activity and exercise, conducted in the proper context, to psychological health and well-being. There is an ongoing need for more research involving randomised controlled trials to establish the dose-response effect of physical activity on the various areas of psychological health and well-being.

Acknowledgements

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Schein RL, Hauck ER and MacIntyre, N. E, Harrision CR et al. (1999). Ageing, fitness and disease in Australia: A comprehensive, and unique resource tool for journal evaluation, using citation data drawn from over 8,400 journals from over 3,000 publishers in 71 countries. Philine: A software package designed to analyse citation data from 8,400 journals in 30 countries. Journal of Information Science, 25, 156-161.


The half of the 20th century witnessed significant changes in the causes of death and disease in Australia. The declining incidence of infectious, communicable disease and coinciding rise in chronic disease has led to an increased focus on the behavioural determinants of health and wellbeing. Substantive evidence now exists to support a general positive role for physical activity and exercise in the reduction of morbidity and mortality at a population level.

Mental health and wellbeing is a major area of emphasis when studying the overall health of the population. Currently in Australia, nearly 30% of the non-fatal burden of disease can be attributed to poor mental health and this burden of mental disorders, with cognitive function and quality of life, this relationship is likely both curvilinear and contextual. Research in athletic populations has shown depressed mood and psychological distress may result from high volumes and/or intensity of training (Armstrong and Vanheest, 2002, Filaire, Bernain, Sagnol and Lac, 2001, O'Connor, Morgan, Raglin, Barksdale and Kalian, 1989).

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The Sports Trainer Page

Produced for Sport Health by Chris Murray RN (SMA, NT Branch)

Skin Care in the Tropics

While millions of fans and sports trainers are gearing up for the AFL finals in the southern states, the sport medicine team in the Northern Territory are gearing up for the start of the Top End season. The season starts early October and continues through until late March.

The treatment and prevention of injuries that occur in AFL are similar in the NT to every other State. We experience our share of meniscus tears, pulled hamstrings and quad muscles, etc. What differs in the NT is our incidence of skin wounds. Over-grading, abrasion, wetsuits and the hard playing surfaces can result in head wounds and cuts. Some of the most common skin conditions seen during the season are a result of bites from mosquitoes and sand flies. These wounds can be very painful and itchy and very quickly lead to inflammation/infec tion and cellulitis requiring medical intervention (CDC Fact Sheet Mosquitoes).

The sports medicine professional must be aware that small cuts can lead to a potential developing Melioidosis. Melioidosis is a Disease caused by a bacteria known as Burkholderia Pseudomallei. The bacteria live below the soil surface during the dry season but after the rains are found in surface water but is ideal for rapid bacteria growth. "Build Up" high humidity levels produce an "Athlete's foot" condition. During the "Build Up" period, the relative humidity is greater than 80% at night and 70% during the day. The humidity and high temperatures of the tropics provide an environment where bacteria can flourish readily and the rate of infection is much higher than in other parts of Australia. The high humidity, hard football grounds and often infrequency in wound management care all play a role in the high rate of infection resulting in head wounds and cuts (they mosquito bites, scratches, cuts or lacerations).

The care of wounds arguably requires greater attention in the NT than anywhere else in Australia. The high humidity, hard grounds and often infrequency in wound management care all play a role in the high rate of infection resulting in head wounds and cuts. Larger wounds will be accessed and referred to medical personnel for suturing. But all wounds should be covered during play. Sutured wounds can be left uncovered when not playing.

Skin Care

Players should be educated on looking after their skin especially in the first humid environment of the north. They are encouraged to use anti-mosquito spray during early morning and twilight hours. These can be purchased from local pharmacies.

Information on Melioidosis is also given out as this can be a potentially dangerous infection and is contacted via broken skin. The wearing of correct footwear and clothes is recommended especially when walking or playing in muddy water. Wearing protective clothing during the height of the day is a good idea as sunburn can be a problem.

Covering sunburn with non-adhesive dressing

If they have blisters a medical officer should first access them. At the beginning of the season it is important that players are given strategies on looking after their skin. In the humidity of the tropics it is recommended that players have at least two showers a day and ensure that when they dry themselves they pay particular attention to areas where skin meets skin as in groins and under arms. It has being found that if players wear bike shorts this helps to alleviate the problem of groin rash.

Encouraging sport personnel to follow simple home care, can prevent lots of problems during the season and ensures that both players and sports medicine professionals have an enjoyable time in the tropics.

Resources

Sport Medicine Level One Manual
Centre for Disease Control NT Fact Sheet Melioidosis/ Mosquitoes www.nt.gov.au/health/cd

Wound Dressing

There is a large choice of dressing available to the SNP to choose from.

One must be aware of the main principles of wound dressing. A dressing must:

- encourage wound healing,
- protect the wound,
- promote ideal wound environment, and
- be cost effective.

The dressing must allow the player to continue to play sport, and not restrict movement. All wounds should be cleaned with normal saline or clean tap water and the surrounding area dried well.

If superficial, a simple adhesive dressing will do and can be left intact for seven days. Dressing the wound has the added advantage of preventing the player from scratching, encourages optimal wound environment and allows the wound to breathe at the same time protecting it.

Larger wounds will be accessed and referred to medical personnel for suturing. But all wounds should be covered during play. Sutured wounds can be left uncovered when not playing.

For your Library

Australia's Health 2004
AIHW Cat. No AUS-44, ABS Cat. No. 8201.0

The latest in this series contains a section on injuries. Copies can be downloaded from www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10014 or a printed version from CanPrint on 1500 889 873, by fax on 02-6293-8533 or by email at sales@infoservices.com.au

Health system expenditure on disease in Australia, 2000-01
AIHW Cat. No. HWE-26

This edition estimates expenditure classified by disease or injury group, age and sex. Estimates are available by area of expenditure: hospitals, high level residential aged care, medical services, other professional services, pharmaceuticals and research. Copies can be downloaded from www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/find/health%20system%20expenditure or a printed version from CanPrint on 1500 889 873, by fax on 02-6293-8533 or by email at sales@infoservices.com.au

Bronwyn moves on

After three and a half years at the helm, SMA Queensland Executive Officer Bronwyn Marshall is moving on to run her own business. The big change takes place with effect from the end of October.
SMA Member Benefits

The SMA Member Benefits team has selected four benefits for September/October that we believe will be of special interest to members.

- Win a free website package
- Reduce your telephone spend with corporate priced plans
- Fleet like discounts and more on purchasing a new vehicle
- Get more rewards out of your credit card

Win a FREE Website for your Business

We are keen to help our small business members to increase their profile and potentially their revenue. If you do not currently have a website presence, why not go into a draw to win a free total website package to get you on line at nil cost. This package will include:

- A 5 page website designed to suit your business
- Your own “.com” domain name
- Hosting of your site for 6 months

To enter this draw, please email your details to us by Friday 29 October. The winning member will be notified on Monday 1 November.

Let us help you reduce your business telecommunication costs

People Telecom will provide you with corporate pricing plans to suit your business needs. Members with small to medium sized businesses will benefit from call plans normally reserved for larger corporates and corporates will benefit from extremely competitive plans. An additional 5% discount has been arranged for all new members.

People Telecom will also provide you with:

- Full suite of voice products (including capped calls)
- Contracted and uncontracted pricing plans
- GSM & CDMA mobile phone offerings
- Full suite of DSL products
- Lease or purchase phone systems
- Dedicated account manager
- Award winning customer service
- Full account analysis
- One convenient account

Take the pain out of buying a new or used vehicle

The Automotive Buying and Finance Service will save you valuable time and money by organising the purchase of your new or used car. All you need to decide on is the make, model and colour. They will also:

- Arrange finance: fleet level discounts available on new vehicles and customised finance at bank rates.
- Take care of your trade in
- Deliver your new car to door to test drive in peace
- Make sure your used car is mechanically checked, detailed, roadworthied and comes with a warranty*
- Not charge you for using this service
- Clearly show your member discount on order forms

Special Offer – September 2004

ABFS Protection Pack^ included with every new car bought during September/October

- Headlight protectors
- Bonnet protectors
- Mud flaps

^ Offer ends 29th October 2004

Are your credit card rewards still rewarding?

In recent months a number of organisations have reduced the value of their Gold Credit Card Rewards Programs including the value of the Qantas Frequent Flyer points. Through your benefits program you still have access to one of the most rewarding cards in the market - the Citibank Gold Card.

Benefit from:

- $ for $ Rewards points
- $ for $ Qantas Frequent Flyer points
- Low interest rate of 6.9% p.a.* for the first 9 months
- No annual fee in the first year
- Bonus Rewards points on balance transfers at a low 6.9% p.a.*

* Fees and charges apply. Terms and Conditions apply and are available upon request or see the Citibank brochure for further details. All Citibank standard credit card Annual Percentage Rates are variable and subject to change.

To find out more about these or your many other member benefits, contact your SMA Member Benefits representative on 1300 133 365 or the member benefits link via www.sma.org.au