

# The IOC Diploma programme in sports medicine

Ronald J Maughan,<sup>1</sup> Lars Engebretsen,<sup>2</sup> Torbjørn Soligard,<sup>2</sup> Richard Budgett<sup>2</sup>

The combination of innate talent and hard training is no longer enough to guarantee success at the highest level of sport, and every successful athlete benefits from a strong support team. Staying healthy and injury free and recovering quickly from any medical problem is important for all athletes. The Medical Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recognised the important role that sports medicine plays in protecting the health of athletes. As part of its commitment to supporting the health and performance of athletes and to the continuing professional development of those who care for them, the IOC Medical Commission now offers a postgraduate-level training programme in sports medicine. The programme is designed to meet the needs of team physicians caring for elite athletes, particularly targeting National Olympic Committee and International Federation physicians.

The programme content and structure are built on existing programmes offered by leading universities, but embrace an international faculty of leading experts to offer a programme that is beyond the resources of any single institution. The programme operates under the academic oversight of an International Academic Advisory Board, comprising 20 internationally recognised experts in all aspects of sport and exercise medicine. Board members will advise on and be responsible for all aspects of

academic standards, including quality assurance of the syllabus content and moderation of student assessment. The programme coordinators are Lars Engebretsen (Norway) and Ron Maughan (UK). The programme is operated on behalf of IOC by Sportsoracle and builds on the successful IOC Diploma programme in Sports Nutrition that has operated since 2006.

The Diploma programme is offered by distance learning on a part-time basis and takes 2 years to complete. It contains web-based lectures supported by reading and online discussion, and includes formal and informal assessment elements. Lectures are provided as web-based presentations with audio and video elements and a navigation tool to allow students to move between topics within the lecture. Lecture material will be supplemented by a programme of directed study, and a password-protected page on the programme website (<http://www.iocsportsmedicine.com>) will provide students with access to further reading material and education resources, including online access to the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. An online forum will allow discussion between students, with tutorial input from the programme faculty.

Students can also participate in annual residential workshops hosted at the IOC Research Centres in Calgary, Cape Town, Melbourne and Oslo, where attendance in the first year will be optional. These workshops offer several advantages such as attendance at an international meeting, taking part in small group seminars and practical sessions, face-to-face interaction, networking with lecturers and fellow students, and opportunities for social and other activities. Students wishing to qualify for the award of the IOC Diploma in Sports Medicine must complete all

programme requirements. On successful completion of the coursework and formal examinations, students are eligible to graduate with an IOC Diploma in Sports Medicine, which will be awarded at a ceremony at the IOC Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The programme is aimed primarily at sports medicine doctors who aim to work with individual athletes and with teams at the Olympic or national level. The course structure and content take account of the fact that some of these individuals will be general practitioners/physicians or other specialists who want to include sports medicine practice in their repertoire. Others will be doctors who want to make a career in sports medicine and will practice full time in the clinic and on the field. All will be medical graduates, but medical training varies around the world and the programme will take account of the different backgrounds of those who enrol. Students enrolling for this programme will normally be in possession of a degree-level qualification in medicine and will be eligible for professional registration as a medical practitioner. Further details of the programme and an application form can be found at <http://www.iocsportsmedicine.com>. The first intake of students will begin their studies in October 2013.

**Competing interests** None.

**Provenance and peer review** Commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

**To cite** Maughan RJ, Engebretsen L, Soligard T, et al. *Br J Sports Med* 2013;**47**:812.

Accepted 20 June 2013



*Br J Sports Med* 2013;**47**:812.  
doi:10.1136/bjsports-2013-092792

<sup>1</sup>School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK; <sup>2</sup>Department of Medical & Scientific, International Olympic Committee, Lausanne, Switzerland

**Correspondence to** Professor Ron Maughan, School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough LE11 3TU, UK; [r.j.maughan@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.maughan@lboro.ac.uk)