Justification

This appears to be required within the medical profession as many doctors think of these as self-inflicted injuries and not worthy of treatment but happily treat the results of obesity, smoking, etc.

a) There are specialised diagnostic needs of a proportion of sports injuries.

b) More exacting rehabilitation, particularly in the higher levels of sport.

c) Experienced advice on suitability of people for particular activities and the various medical aspects of a sporting programme.

d) Prevention of re-injury and the development of long term sequela such as osteoarthrosis from ligamentous laxity.

e) There are spin-offs for the general public in the improved treatment of soft tissue injuries and some advances in diagnosis and surgical treatment e.g. in knee ligament injuries.

Requirements

Firstly, an enthusiast to run the clinic who must realise that this has to be a team venture. He or she must be able to understand athletic problems and really communicate with the patient. They must be able to cooperate with medical, scientific and untrained personnel.

Next, the situation and the time of the clinic are important. It would appear that a general hospital is an ideal situation because of the availability of other services. Monday would appear to be the day of choice for the clinic provided there is a rapid referral and the ability to see the recent injuries from that weekend.

Finally, there must be good liaison with various associates. Obviously with the physiotherapy department to obtain the exacting and rapid rehabilitation required. Good relations with the orthopaedic surgeon are essential and to a lesser extent, other specialist services such as cardiology, neurology etc. Similarly with sports scientists and coaches in various sports who are able to give invaluable advice.

Running Procedure

Referral should be from General Practitioners, team doctors or other hospital department. Treatment should be available each day and wherever possible at lunchtime or early evening to enable the athlete to be treated and still continue at work. The injured athlete requires more than electrotherapy and there should be some areas for him to undertake progressive rehabilitation exercises under close supervision. Having treatment carried out on different injuries in the one group requires self-discipline from the patient and we have found that this is strictly provided by the group themselves.

Educational Responsibilities

Some training must be given to medical students and postgraduates wherever possible in order to improve the overall treatment of sports injuries. Special courses are run for coaches and trainers.

Future Development

Sports Medicine is a speciality in its own right in many parts of the world and in E. Germany this consists of a five year postgraduate training programme. In this country sport itself must decide whether it wants Sports Medicine with trained doctors capable of giving an informed opinion or casual medical advice from acquaintances of various officials. The only people who think Sports Medicine to be unworthy of detailed study are those who “know nowt”.