LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bone density in elderly women

EDITOR,—In the article by Rhodes et al1 “Effects of one year of resistance training on the relation between muscular strength and bone density in elderly women”, I was surprised to see no mention of HRT status in the women in the trial. Given the relatively small number of women taking part, surely this is quite an important variable?

Bone density in elderly women: a randomized controlled trial


Editors' reply

EDITOR,—In assessing the health benefits and risks of physical activity, there has been much interest in the relation between exercise and the immune and inflammatory responses. However, only a very limited number of studies have examined the role of exercise on adhesion molecule profiles. P-selectin (CD62P) is an adhesion molecule expressed on activated platelets and endothelial cell-surface. It is one of a group of related molecules that play an important role in leukocyte rolling on the vascular endothelium. Therefore it is intimately involved in the regulation of immune and inflammatory responses.

The genetics of physical fitness


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Serum concentrations of P-selectin decline rapidly in resting humans

EDITOR,—In assessing the health benefits and risks of physical activity, there has been much interest in the relation between exercise and the immune and inflammatory responses. However, only a very limited number of studies have examined the role of exercise on adhesion molecule profiles.

The genetics of physical fitness


Heavy smokers
Light smokers
Non-smokers

CONCENTRATION OF SOLUBLE P-SELECTIN (ng/ml)

HEAVY SMOKERS
LIGHT SMOKERS
NON-SMOKERS

SERUM CONCENTRATION OF P-SELECTIN (ng/ml)


Figure 1 Mean concentration of soluble P-selectin (ng/ml) in serum of resting heavy smokers, light smokers, and non-smokers at baseline and various time points after smoking a standard 2R1 research cigarette (non-smokers did not smoke). Differences in the concentration of soluble P-selectin between smoking groups at baseline were analysed using a two group t test. No significant differences were found. Variations in the concentration of soluble P-selectin, with respect to smoking group and time, were measured by two way repeated measures analysis of variance with a post-analysis contrast performed using the Student-Newman-Keuls method. The decrease in the concentration of soluble P-selectin with time was significant in all smoking groups (p<0.001). Adapted from Scott et al.

The genetics of physical fitness

activation. Jilma et al had previously shown that, in healthy men, exercise could lead to an increase in the serum concentration of soluble intercellular adhesion molecule-1, another adhesion molecule involved in the chain of receptor-ligand interactions regulating leukocyte transmigration in inflammatory and immune responses.

We have shown that a period of rest can lead to a rapid decrease in circulating concentrations of soluble P-selectin. This observation is, to the best of our knowledge, entirely novel and may represent an important insight into the complex relation between physical activity and the inflammatory response. Further studies by those with expertise in sports physiology and medicine may be warranted.

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Exercise at altitude

Editor,—In the early sixties I established a record for the running ascent of Kilimanjaro (19 340 feet (5985 m)) of 6 hours and 48 minutes, and my colleague (and current London marathoner) Norman Myers ran up and down the same mountain (36 miles) in 13 hours and 20 minutes, both from a start of around 6000 feet (1828 m), and both of us unaccompanied. We also lived for six and 25 years respectively at altitudes varying from 5200 feet (1600 m) to 7000 feet (2100 m). Neither of us gave any of this much thought.

However, on reading today’s issue of the journal, in particular Buckler and O’Higgins1 on medical provision for a downhill marathon (which started at a mere 5184 m), and Bailey et al2 on worries about glutamine and immune status (in a group spending a mere four weeks at 1640 m), I am not in the slightest detracting from such highly interesting and important work, when I humbly observe that I am simply glad such data were not available before we set foot in East Africa!!

Craig Sharp
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Here we are, at the second edition already, only five years after the first appearance of the first edition! Has sports medicine changed that much? With this in mind, I compared the editions and found some interesting similarities and differences. The four editors and seven of the chapters are the same. Eleven chapters have new authors, and seven chapters are new. Some chapters have been dropped from the second edition, although some of these are covered elsewhere. There is no preface to the second edition which is odd, but the already good layout is improved by the use of a bold type face for paragraph headings. I found no typographical errors but the antipodean x ray photograph on page 21 was challenging.

The chapter contents are largely the same between editions and authors, and the core knowledge base is essentially unchanged. The evidence base is a mixture of clinical experience, empiricism, and scientific trials, which come from a group of authors of national and international standing. There are some useful additions to some chapters, for example the inclusion of valvular disease in the chapter on sudden death. The chapter on the immediate treatment of severe injury is improved with the use of ATLS guidelines. I thought that the chapter on benefits of exercise could have been expanded, and I particularly found no comment on the effects of exercise on pregnancy and vice versa. In chapter 1, I think it would have been useful to mention the need to know the occupation of a sportsperson unless they are lucky enough to participate in sport full time.

BOOK REVIEWS


Athletes who want up to date advice on sports nutrition are the targeted readers for this book. It would also be a useful addition to the bookshelf of a sports coach or scientist.

The second edition enhances the chapters on weight control and eating disorders and covers the full spectrum of sports nutrition, with advice for training, competing, and recovery, as well as healthy eating for life.

The author is one of the best known writers on sports nutrition in the United States, a registered dietitian and athlete. She deals with the subject in a “user friendly” American style with lots of practical advice, as well as the theory behind why certain practices should/should not be carried out.

About one third of this book is devoted to recipes, with a useful nutritional analysis. They are generally quick and easy to prepare, with ingredients that for the most part are available in the United Kingdom, although the terminology occasionally differs. As with all American cookbooks, the ingredients are measured in cups which I find “off-putting”.

There is a good bibliography and reference section for those who want to delve deeper into specific subjects.

This is an excellent book if you are American, and I found much of the practical advice useful. For the British reader, there are perhaps too many references to American food products and RDAs referring to nutrients per pound body weight or to 8 oz of fluid, whereas we are now thinking in terms of kg and 100 ml respectively.

Analysis
Presentation 14/20
Comprehensiveness 16/20
Readability 14/20
Relevance 17/20
Evidence basis 16/20
Total 77/100

Helen M Isaac
Accredited Sports Diettian and Consultant in Sports Nutrition, 14 Bussan Park Road, Harrogate HG2 9NB, United Kingdom

Interactive skeleton. Sports and kinetic edition. P Abrahams, J Anderson, D Field. (Technical information: PC, Pentium processor, 16 MB Ram 16 bit or Hi Colour display; Windows 95,98 NT4.0; MAC, Powermac or better processor; 6 MB free Ram; thousands of color display; Windows 95,98; MAC, OS 7.1 or higher. £99.) Primal Pictures Ltd (www.primalpictures.com). ISBN 1-902470-07-9.

I found that this disc was easy to load—my Pentium 233 64 MB RAM achieved it automatically with no obvious help from myself. Initial browsing was fun; the graphics were clear and the instructions concise. With no difficulty I could locate bones and muscle attachments while reading the relevant text alongside the images. Rotating the image and zooming up and down the body was no sweat, even for a 37 year old barely literate novice. There were a number of nice features such as images of anatomical dissections or x ray photographs that could be enlarged and labelled at will. The spoken dialogue was, however, rather basic. The search facility was also poor, searches for sacroiliac joint, sinus tarsi, and subacromial bursa all drawing blanks.

Did I like it and would I buy it? Personally, I prefer to refer to good old fashioned textbooks and to visualise anatomy from a real life skeleton, and hence would not invest. I was impressed by some of the imagery and tools. The ability to take an image and transfer it to a PowerPoint slide was most useful. My last impression was one of a gimmick that was fun, but when push comes to shove, my colour atlas would be my first choice. I’m certain that students of anatomy—whether medical, physiotherapy, or sports science—would find it of use, especially the quiz facility.

Analysis
Presentation 18/20
Comprehensiveness 10/20
Readability 16/20
Relevance 16/20
Evidence basis 12/20
Total 72/100

Bruce Thompson
General practitioner
Lurgan, Northern Ireland
The keynote lectures by Professor Norbert have attracted a lot of interest but in view of recent events at the Sydney Olympics, the session hosted by the British Olympic Association and the Diplomates has also attracted a very large audience. Booking and enquiries should be made to Mrs Sue Roberts, BASEM Company Office, 12 Greenside Avenue, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 7SA, UK.

**Dilemmas in sport: a journey through ethics, the law and medicine**

The Institute of Sports Medicine together with the Sports Medicine Section of the Royal Society of Medicine have organised a meeting entitled “Dilemmas in sport: a journey through ethics, the law and medicine”. This all day meeting will take place on 8 November 2000 at the Royal Society of Medicine in London. A wide range of speakers from the world of sport, politics, and the law will address many of the controversial aspects of sports medicine including the ethics of boxing and drug in sport. John Lloyd Parry, a BASEM stalwart, is the current President of the section of Sports Medicine at the RSM.

**Drugs in sport**

The issue of drugs in sport continues to become increasingly complex. Advising athletes about prohibited and permitted medications is difficult. New initiatives by the British National Formulary and MIMS should help doctors to avoid any possible prescribing pitfalls. UKSPORT have produced a Comptitors’ and Officials’ guide which has been made available to teams and officials at major events. There is also an information line at UK Sport, which is supported by a range of fact sheets.

**Centre for Sport and Exercise Science**

Sheffield Hallam University have renamed their Sports Science Research Institute. It will now be known as the Centre for Sport and Exercise Science (CSES). It will have three subdivisions: the Centre for Sport Performance, the Centre for Corporate Wellness, and the Centre for Exercise and Health. It is fascinating to see this evolution of sports science and the greater inclusion of aspects of exercise and health.

**How to complain about the Journal?**

You probably didn’t know this but this journal, as with other journals published by the BMJ Publishing Group, is regulated by the press complaints commission. The publishing group pay a fee to be part of this system of regulation and adhere to a code of practice and are professionally self regulating. The code of practice includes guidance on maintaining the highest professional and ethical standards. It protects both the rights of the individual and the public’s right to know. If you do have a problem with any aspect of the journal, please do let us know and we will try to resolve any difficulties. If you have a serious problem, a copy of the guidance notes may be obtained from the Press Complaints Commission, 1 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JB, UK.

**BACHL (Austria) and Dr Bob Cantu (USA)**
An introduction to sports physiotherapy
28 October 2000; Wales, UK
Further details: Dawn Walling. Tel: +44 (0)20 7251 0583 x 238; email: dawn.walling@nsmi.org.uk

British Association of Sport and Exercise Medicine congress
3–5 November 2000; Tewkesbury, UK
Final bookings should be received by 2 October 2000.
Lectures include:
● Muscular conditioning during space station MIR flight
● Health enhancing physical activity—an upgrowing challenge for sports medicine
Please note that there have been some small changes to the congress programme.
Further details: Mrs Sue Roberts, BASEM Company Office, 12 Greenside Avenue, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 7SA. Tel/fax: 01928 732 961; email: basemoffice@compuserve.com
Website: www.pmhcs.com/basem

6th International Sport Sciences Congress
3 November–5 November, 2000; Ankara, Turkey
Further details: Associate Professor G Demirhan, Hacettepe University, School of Sport Sciences and Technology, Beytepe 06532, Ankara, Turkey. Tel: 90 312 299 2167; email: demirhan@ada.net.tr

20th national congress of the Société Française de Médecine de Sport:
Physical activity, sport and health
6–8 December 2000; Paris, France
Topics include:
● Physical activity and fertility
● Sport and aging
● Rehabilitation
Further details: Pranacom, 40 rue des Blancs Manteaux, 75004 Paris, France. Email: pranacom.ifrance.com
Website: www.sfms.asso.fr

True or false?—answers
(T = true; F = false)
p 326: Petrella RJ. Is exercise effective treatment for osteoarthritis of the knee?
1 (a) T; (b) F; (c) F; (d) T 2 (a) T; (b) T; (c) F; (d) T 3 (a) T; (b) T; (c) T; (d) T 4 (a) T; (b) T; (c) T; (d) T 5 (a) T; (b) F; (c) T; (d) T.