

# Debating transversus abdominis, the “exercise pill” and whether flying limits athletes’ performance on arrival

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In this issue of *BJSM*, Allison and Morris (see page 630)<sup>1</sup> question some fundamental beliefs regarding core stability. Whether or not you agree with them, the paper raises an important issue. It is difficult to move research into practice but sometimes practice behaviours do seem to take off ahead of the clinical evidence. Is this the case here or not? Make up your own mind. Associate Editor Professor Paul Hodges responds in December’s *BJSM*.

Jill Cook (see page 563)<sup>2</sup> takes this issue and considers it more broadly. Are all those patients who worked diligently on the Cybex machine in the 1980s better off for that? (I can see the younger reader yelling out: “Hey Mum, what’s a Cybex?”). But I digress. The editorial reminds both clinicians and scientists that close communication is essential. As one of the worlds leading clinician-scientists, Jill Cook is well placed to make us think about this for the ultimate benefit of our patients.

## RESPONSE TO THE CELL PAPER: “EXERCISE PILL”

*BJSM* is renowned for being a tad contrarian and this month we benefit from having Indiana’s Stu Warden and Robyn Fuchs comment on the recent report of a pill<sup>3</sup> that provides all the benefits of exercise without you actually having to go to the trouble (see page 562).<sup>4</sup> What will “Big Pharma” think of next? A pill that provides all the benefits of sex without having to go to the trouble? But ignore me, and enjoy their provocative commentary. What do you think of the

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concept of an exercise pill? Should we promote exercise as a “polypill”? Comment on the *BJSM* Blog (<http://blogs.bmj.com/BJSM>)

In this issue, Andrew Nichols (see page 609)<sup>5</sup> argues that sports medicine research methodology is improving and we can be confident that our field has an increasingly scientific basis. Good thing! He also found that *BJSM* authors span more countries than do those of other sports medicine journals. For example, please see the papers on (1) the metabolic cost of assisting walking patterns from Japan (see page 622)<sup>6</sup> and (2) from Brazil, the effect of high-intensity prolonged exercise on muscle.<sup>7</sup> An interesting note comes in from New Zealand: flying for 10-13 hours reduces oxygen saturation and is like being at altitude (see page 577).<sup>8</sup> This has immediate application for personal travellers and teams, as it may not make sense for a team to arrive on the day of competition.

## UK HEALTH STUDY: WATCHING A NATION PLAY SPORT!

On the subject of super science, you’ll also find the results of the UK Health Study (see page 601).<sup>9</sup> These novel data provide a temporal trend for 60 000 participants! Without giving away the ending here, it looks moderately hopeful that physical activity can be improved in some segments but not in others. We still have a lot of work to do to narrow the gap in physical activity adoption between lower and higher socioeconomic strata and between white and ethnic minority groups. Please visit relevant linked papers in *BJSM*. See April’s meta-analysis of walking<sup>10</sup> and the “walking issue” (May, 2008) in which Williams<sup>11</sup> analysed 7000 men in the US and found that walking had profound effects on BMI and waist circumference in those with the highest

BMI. This is great news. Show me the pill that will do that without side-effects.

And before I leave this issue don’t forget to check out “Online First”. You’ll find gems from authors such as Frank Booth, Stephen Blair, Kay Crossley and the aforementioned Paul Hodges, to name just a few. *BJSM* gains terrific support from sports medicine luminaries – our challenge is to help you find their papers fast! The downside is that it is difficult to get papers into *BJSM* – we can accept only 10% of submissions. I will save my explanation of that – and how to defy the odds – on the *BJSM* Blog, (<http://blogs.bmj.com/BJSM>) rather than on this page, which comes out in the print version of the journal. If you are reading this in the print form, remember that “the e-version is the version”, so please visit on the web as well. We’ve enlarged the cover graphic a bit to help you read the titles and you can find the free articles right there on the home page. Click on the cover icon and you are in!

**Competing interests:** None.

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## CORRECTION

There was an error in the pagination of the articles published in the October and November 2008 issues of the journal. Please see a corrected list of citations below. The journal apologises for this error.

**Khan KM.** Preventing ACL injuries, turning research into practice and avoiding media ambush. *Br J Sports Med* 2008;**42**:483–4. should be **Khan KM.** Preventing ACL injuries, turning research into practice and avoiding media ambush. *Br J Sports Med* 2008;**42**:783–4.

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