

# Expanding the sport and exercise medicine online community and quality international education: join the SMA journey in 2021!

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Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) has prioritised the health of Australians during COVID-19. We are proud of the central role we have played in enabling the graduated and near complete return to sport following the COVID-19 shutdowns, across both community and elite level competitions in Australia. SMA's webinars have guided sports trainers (students, parents or first-aid volunteers) to operate in a COVID-19 safe environment and return athletes safely to sport, while also covering the essentials of telehealth in sports medicine and importance of infection control in sport (<https://bit.ly/3a5N07K>).

## SAFE SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

SMA has used COVID-19 literature to inform its guidance on safe return across all levels of sporting competition in Australia. We direct the reader to Dr Solomon's review that operationalises return to sport considerations in the current COVID-19 environment for the five North American professional sports leagues (*see page 417*). While centred on the elite sporting environment, the key messages are relevant to all sporting levels and codes globally. Unfortunately, even with optimal planning and hygiene practices, positive cases among athletes and their support staff are still occurring. Have you managed an athlete with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection? Rankin and Heron (*see page 456*) have produced a useful infographic that will help guide you through this scenario with confidence! These excellent papers expand on BJSM's growing COVID-19 repository of scientific and expert medical return to sport guidance (<https://bit.ly/37U9vLw>).

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During this pandemic, SMA has continued to advocate regular physical activity to both its members and the wider Australian public. Professor Millet and colleagues' editorial describes physical activity as a protective factor for COVID-19 via enhanced mitochondrial fitness (*see page 413*). Importantly, they further caution that political measures to curb the COVID-19 pandemic have led to decreases in physical activity that may lead to an increase in all-cause mortality but also COVID-19 susceptibility and severity. Conversely, Brooks (now based in Melbourne) and colleagues have placed a positive spin on the COVID-19 pandemic in their editorial suggesting that it provides an unprecedented active transport public health opportunity (*see page 411*). Social distancing on public transport limits usage. This could provide healthcare professionals with a perfect opportunity to advocate for active commuting options such as walking and cycling—have you tried to push this message yet?

If you want further COVID-19 content, head to the BJSM podcasts on infection control during travel, cardiac, respiratory and mental health concerns linked to COVID-19 in athletes, and guidance on returning to training post lockdown periods (<https://bit.ly/34shhdr>).

## HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

Australia is looking forward to hosting the world's best tennis players at the Australian Open. Over the past few years, this competition has received extensive media coverage on the thermal stress the players often compete under, contributing to dehydration or even worse, heat illness. The delayed Tokyo Olympics will have similar hot and humid conditions and Canberra University's Dr Périard has detailed hydration strategies to combat this (*see page 410*).

In addition to hydration, nutrition is a key component of athletic performance. In this edition, you can read both the doctors' (*see page 412*) and coaches'—provided by Wenger (*see page 409*)—view on nutrition before heading to the UEFA Expert Group 2020 Consensus Statement on Nutrition in Elite Football (*see page 416*). This paper is loaded with practical recommendations on nutrition for training, rehabilitation, competition and travel, cultural diversity considerations, and the use of supplements. If you prefer learning visually, head to the infographic covering all of these recommendations (*see page 453*).

## EXERCISE APPS

Taking a (slight) sideways step from nutrition and towards Relative Energy Deficiency Syndromes, we highlight the work of Bruinvels *et al* detailing the incidence and impact of menstrual cycle symptoms in exercising women who were recruited from the Strava exercise app user database (*see page 438*). Perhaps if we empower and educate menstruating female athletes more on the effect of the menstrual cycle on performance, we can move towards individual training plans to improve outcomes. If this link between technology and exercise interests you, make sure you read Dr Laranjo *et al*'s review on the link between smartphone applications/activity trackers and (*see page 422*) physical activity—do you think they make people more active?

SMA has embraced technology and is excited to announce the upcoming launch of 'SMA Connect' in early 2021—Australia's largest multidisciplinary sports medicine organisation with discussion forums, member directory and all-new member resource portal. Keep your eyes peeled for it or become an SMA member to get ahead (<https://bit.ly/3rr0bpr>)!

## SMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SMA is excited to announce that the next Annual Conference will be held in Melbourne on 7–9 October 2021. After having to cancel the 2020 edition due to the COVID-19

pandemic, we look forward to bringing the Sport and Exercise Medicine community together with a vibrant and diverse scientific programme bolstered by an expansive social programme providing lots of opportunity to network. We cannot wait to see you there!

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