

BASEM special issue: the calm after a storm

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Welcome to the British Association of Sport and Exercise Medicine (BASEM) edition of *BJSM*. The overarching BASEM Annual conference 2022 theme is Elite, Olympic and Paralympic Sport and Exercise in Medicine and Health, with conference straplines of 'Hot topics and lessons from the Tokyo Olympics during a universal crisis, health impact of a lifetime in elite Paralympic and Olympic sport, and the national and European initiatives in physical activity promotion and exercise prescription.' The BASEM annual conference will be held at The Grand Hotel in Brighton on 26–27 May. The articles selected in this issue are both to generate thought in the new environment we find ourselves in amid global warming, and as we begin to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as provide useful information that will inform clinical practice across a range of disciplines and health professionals.

Drawing inspiration from the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, it may be apt to quote the ancient Japanese proverb *ame futte ji katamaru* (which literally translates as 'The ground becomes firm after rain' and may broadly relate to the English phrase 'the calm after a storm'). After an extraordinarily challenging 2 years and a postponed build up to Tokyo 2020, the obstacles athletes and their support teams had to overcome were significant. These included the various restrictions around COVID-19 and the ever-present risk of heat illness during competition at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This issue pays special attention to the extra challenges faced by all during these times.

Several topics highlighted in this issue parallel material that will be covered in the BASEM Annual Conference on 26–27 May in Brighton, UK. The old adage that prevention may be better than cure gets an extra boost by the systematic review by Lutter *et al* which demonstrates that prevention strategies for sports injuries are cost-effective approaches (*see page 468*). The Editorial led by Laybourn-Langton *et al* brings into sharp focus the global public health crisis of the failure to keep global temperature rise below 1.5°C (*see page 420*). With global



warming, the heat and humidity experienced at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics are likely to become a more regular occurrence in years to come, and athletes and their team should be mindful of potential countermeasures to mitigate this, especially in certain groups of athletes who may be more exposed to heat stresses or whose thermoregulatory mechanisms may be impaired. Racinais *et al* report the association between heat acclimation and performance from the 2019 Doha Athletics Championships potentially demonstrating the vital importance of preparation (*see page 437*). The early recognition of impending heat illness is critical, and Buller *et al* report a novel use of real-time accelerometer data to identify gait instability in a military cohort and estimate impending exertional heat stroke (*see page 444*).

Dealing with the aftermath of the COVID-19 global pandemic on both the altered physical activity behaviour of the general population and the physiological sequelae of infection on elite athletes are also some of the topics covered in the BASEM conference. In this issue, an Editorial by Conroy and colleagues outlines digital tools for personalised physical activity promotion, pertinent to the sedentary behaviour related to national restrictions of movement during initial lockdowns (*see page 422*). A consensus statement by Jones *et al* reinforces the understanding that the benefits of physical activity outweigh any risks in people living with long-term conditions (*see page 425*). Phelan *et al* discuss indications for cardiac imaging in competitive athletes after COVID-19 infection (*see page 423*), an area

that is being updated frequently as new data arises.

Finally, a couple of articles consider several important issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion in sport, an area in which there are initiatives to improve representation by both BASEM and the BJSM. Davenport *et al* report problems faced by 20 elite pregnant athletes when navigating sport participation (*see page 450*) and Memon *et al* highlight the dearth of female editors from low-income and middle-income countries in sports science and rehabilitation journals (*see page 456*). Further works on issues of female health, well-being and performance are the focus of the forthcoming NCSEM seminar series, to be held online in May; for information see www.ncsem-em.org.uk/events.

As we emerge into the relative calm after a storm, what can we learn from the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, held during this global pandemic, which can improve the health, performance and well-being of the population and elite athletes alike? We hope that the articles selected in this issue are broad enough to interest our diverse readership, are thought provoking and useful and we look forward to seeing you in Brighton at the 2022 BASEM Annual Conference.

<https://basem.co.uk/event/basem-2022-annual-conference/>

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