

# Collaboration nation: building bridges not barriers for a stronger future

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'Individual commitment to a group effort—that's what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilisation work'. The American coaching icon Vince Lombardi once made this statement that stretches beyond sporting boundaries.

Anyone working as part of a support team with individuals in performing arts or sports would recognise that there is great value to colleagues working together, sharing their resources and knowledge for an established objective. The nurturing of relationships and the capacity to connect with other stakeholders in our environments are fundamental to success in high performance and quality injury management.<sup>1</sup>

By collaborating with others, professionals operating in sports and performing arts can pool their knowledge, skills and resources to achieve goals that exceed the abilities of any one person.<sup>2</sup> A comprehensive view of organisational goals and functions considering all stakeholders' needs benefits the athlete or performer at the centre of any rehabilitative, preventative or performance programme.<sup>3</sup>

The principles and context of collaboration are themes contained within several of the papers in this special Association of Chartered Physios in Sport and Exercise Medicine (ACPSEM) issue. Collaboration is also a wider consideration for the organisation, as there are evolving roles for physios among sport members in applied sports, teams and theatre or dance companies.

Sport touches many in some capacity through supporting and/or participating. Its power is difficult to measure but Dr Kanishka Pandey places the spotlight on how sport transformed a community (*see page 934*). At the other end of the spectrum, the Olympic and Paralympic games are hosted in Paris this summer, so it is timely that two original articles focus on the lesser-researched para-athlete population. The areas of interest explored

are mental health (*see page 902*) and urinary incontinence (*see page 895*). A discussion piece by Nico Pronk (*see page 932*) aims to provide evidence-based guidance for practitioners on the physical activity paradox while closing research gaps. Staying with exercise Marc-Olivier Dube (*see page 936*) explores whether adding motor control or strengthening exercises to education results in improved outcomes for rotator cuff pain.

Our recent ACPSEM BJSM blog series interrogated the principles and components advocated to achieve a coherent, athlete-centred, performance-focused rehabilitation approach. It explores the working relationship between physiotherapy and strength and conditioning (S&C) practitioners and the role that collaboration plays in their support of the injured athlete.<sup>4,5</sup>

The themes explored through the entire four-part series demonstrate the importance of placing the athlete at the centre of the process. This is critical when collaborators come together to establish a holistic outlook on any athlete's injury. The blog expressed how well-placed S&C coaches and physiotherapists work together as problem solvers while acknowledging other stakeholders.

Physiotherapists are part of a cohesive interdisciplinary team identifying contextual, physical and psychosocial factors and key objectives in the planning of rehabilitation along the continuum from injury through return to participation and performance.

Physios are also well-established leaders within the sport at all levels. This summer, chartered physios will lead and contribute towards the Team GB and Paralympic GB support of athletes in Paris (through Nicki Combarro and Catherine Smaill, respectively). Their attitude, behaviours and communication will influence the collaborative culture of the groups and motivate or empower their associated support staff. Facilitating the necessary teamwork and participation in leading and working with our athletes in the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games is a credit to those tasked with supporting the athletes and programmes at the

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National Governing Body and UK Sports Institute levels.

As described, a spirit of collaboration generates an atmosphere where strong relationships influence culture, psychological safety and performance, which is optimal in the performing arts and sporting worlds.<sup>6</sup> It is with this spirit in mind that ACPSEM embarked upon an ambitious desire for knowledge transfer and translation in a formal environment with complementary organisations and professionals. One such novel partnership is with the UK Strength & Conditioning Association. We are bringing the two professions to a single venue this autumn: the East Midlands Conference Centre, 13–15 September 2024.

The @Physiosinsport educational programme offers a stimulating range of diverse musculoskeletal and thought-provoking topics to help open the weekend. Delegates' attention will be drawn to the collaborative professional nature of S&C with physio in rehab planning, neurodiverse athletes and the impact of strengthening within a common gym environment, problem-solving for environmental health challenges, the impact of youth injuries on the developing athlete and the role of the soleus as a powerhouse across the range of running!

The theme of 'Strength in Collaboration' will shine through from all speakers, with details to be found on our microsite, <https://bit.ly/m/PhysiosinsportConferen24>.

It seems appropriate to end on a quote attributed to Charles Darwin: 'It's the long history of humankind (and animal

kind, too) that those who learnt to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.’

Enjoy the issue and all of your collaborations!

X Stephen Mutch @Spaceclinics

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