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Sports and Medicine

Sport und Medizin



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Editor-in-Chief of the
German Journal of
Sports Medicine
1959 – 1999

For centuries, athletes have needed doctors only in case of injury and illness. Medicine could only be therapeutically active. That changed with the development of preventive medicine. In the late 1940s and 50s, basic research supported by experiments in sports medicine revealed what morphological and functional adaptations to exercise and training are possible, which can act to offset various pathological processes in the body. This applies to both cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. Thus sports medicine has developed to a spearhead in prevention.

The choice of the term “sports medicine” has been increasingly used since the second decade of the 20th century. In 1958, the term was first scientifically defined:

“Sports medicine represents the efforts of theoretical and practical medicine to analyze the influence of exercise, training and sports, as well as of lack of exercise, on healthy and sick people of all ages, in order to make the findings available for prevention, therapy and rehabilitation and for athletes.” (Hollmann

1958). This definition was officially accepted by the World League of Sports Medicine in 1977.

Foremost in the dedicated research, teaching and practice is thus preventive medicine. A scientifically-based training theory arose primarily from sports medicine research as a connecting link between numerous scientific and sports-practical disciplines. Its use ranges from childhood and adolescence, through adulthood and on to the elderly.

Thanks to sports-medical research on the influence of exercise on the human brain, which was started in the 1980s, we now know that physical exercise from childhood to advanced age can improve intellectual capacity by means of structural changes and more, it can reduce the probability that dementia, such as Alzheimers, will occur.

In order to be applied in practice, the knowledge obtained from research requires as much information to the public as possible. The need for a dedicated journal was already noted at the founding of the first sports-medical league in the world (“Deutsches Reichskomitee zur



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Figure 1

Professor Wildor Hollman in front of then-novel spiroergometry equipment in 1986.

wissenschaftlichen Erforschung des Sports und der Leibesübungen”) in Oberhof/Thüringen. Sports-medical reports appearing on an irregular basis had existed since the early 1920s. The information sheet was called “Deutsche Zeitschrift für Sportmedizin”, and at the time, it was the first journal of its kind in the world. After its near-total demise in the 1930s and 40s, it was thanks to Ministerialrat Dr. Mallwitz, the “good Spirit” of German sports medicine, and his tireless campaigning that the Tries Verlag in Freiburg was willing to publish a journal to appear regularly every month. Mallwitz recruited Oberregierungsrat Dr. med. Hammacher from Karlsruhe as editor. When Dr. Hammacher had increasing difficulty recruiting authors for the journal, he approached me with the request that I become his successor. At that time, I had close personal contacts to the Deutschen Ärzteverlag in Cologne, which agreed to take over from the Tries Verlag. So I acted as Editor-in-Chief from 1959 to 1998. Happily, the journal’s circulation increased, leading to a monthly issue of 15,000 copies in the 1980s. The position of Editor-in-Chief these days is in the capable hands of Prof. Dr. med. Jürgen Steinacker.

In the DDR, sports medicine played a particularly important role for political reasons. Starting in 1961, the journal “Medizin und Sport” appeared regularly as the official organ of the East German Society of Sports Medicine. After 1969, it was issued in cooperation with the sports-medical Office of the DDR. The position of Editor-in-Chief was in the hands of Prof. Dr. med. Kurt Franke for many years. In light of the political development toward German Reunification, the journal appeared for the last time in 1991. ■



Figure 2

Ward doctors in the Medical University Hospital Cologne. Next to Prof. Wildor Hollmann is Dr. med. Norbert Tietz, his friend from prisoner-of-war days (1953).