Clinical Sports Medicine – Anniversary of a Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Specialty

Klinische Sportmedizin – Interdisziplinarität und Kollegialität feiern Jubiläum

There are probably few medical specialties that are more interdisciplinary than clinical sports medicine. Many clinicians of various specialties as well as scientists collaborate in addressing queries concerning sports and physical activity in connection with health, prevention, therapy and performance development.

Interdisciplinary Richness

There is hardly another speciality with so many scientific and clinical facets, comprised as it is of the expertise of specialists, but which can only be successfully dealt with by interdisciplinary exchange and the often-cited “looking beyond the end of one’s nose”. The interdisciplinary nature refers not only to the various clinical disciplines but also to multiple basic sciences, all united by the fascination with the effects of sports and exercise.

Thereby, interdisciplinary richness includes preventive aspects of sports and physical activity in nearly all clinical patterns of disease with all the precautionary measures for safe participation in sports just as much as care of athletes in high-performance sports, where development of the maximum performance usually is only possible when health is at its best-possible level. What other specialty offers such a range of (mostly positive) topics?

Unfortunately, it is not (yet) possible in Germany to delve into these aspects at a specialist level to bring them into broad clinical application. Maybe this is where we need to look beyond the tips of our noses and promote our specialty with greater self-confidence.

Interactivity, Collegiality and Fairness

In addition to the described interdisciplinary nature, sports teaches us to be competitive and at the same time interactive, considerate and fair. In team sports, the collective of the players is always better than the sum of the individuals. This analogy, too, can be applied in several ways to Sports Medicine, maybe because many colleagues working in sports medicine actively participate in sports or did so in the past.

Sports, Medicine and Health Summit 2023

All these characteristics of applied clinical sports medicine are embodied in the Sports, Medicine and Health Summit 2023 from 22nd to 24th June at the CCH in Hamburg. The 50th anniversary of the German Congress of Sports Physicians is at the center of three exciting and productive days which address networking and scientific exchange, made especially attractive for clinical colleagues by a considerably expanded program of continued and post-graduate education.

In addition, the “Global Alliance against Physical Inactivity” as part of the annual meeting of the European Initiative for Exercise in Medicine presents another milestone in the world-wide promotion of sports and physical activity in the prevention and therapy of diseases. Moreover, a large part of the program is dedicated to the practical transfer of sports-medical knowledge. In the sense of the interdisciplinary nature already described, the Summit brings together all of the professional groups interested and involved in sports-medical topics – and that brings the tradition of the Deutscher Sportärztekongress to life again for the 50th time.

Topics in Focus

The topics in focus at the Summit present current activities in German sports medicine. After-effects of the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic – especially with focus on Long- or Post-COVID-Syndromes – remain omnipresent in practices and clinics. Particularly here, sports-therapeutic interventions offer options which are often not to be found in clinical medicine. The interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration described above become clear in a unique composite project to investigate the results and effects of sports on and in COVID-19 (CoSmo-S) (3).

Back pain, as a widespread disease, serves as another example of the way in which broad interdisciplinary national research projects can give rise to clinical recommendations (2).

Sports-medical research and treatment in high-performance sports have reeded into the background recently for a variety of reasons. That – and how – these can make a decisive contribution to performance capacity, health maintenance or restitution of health in elite athletes without impermissible substances and methods can not only be regularly confirmed at large athletic events (6), but is also a central component of the Summit.

Last but not least and also based on my own research and clinical activity, the Summit takes as one theme aspects of sports neurology – still a young sports-medical and neurological subspecialty.

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The clinical and scientific spectrum here covers much more than only sports-associated concussion or other injuries or overstrain damage to the peripheral and central nervous system. Differentiated sports-therapeutic interventions in neurological diseases or the transfer of neuroscientific mechanisms to effective training programs for the promotion of health, regeneration and performance can be cited here.

As in so many other sports-medical specialties, focus in performance and leisure sports is not only on adults, but also on children and the elderly. Training interventions which combine systematic neurocognitive and differentiated motoric demands within cognitive-motoric training are currently receiving greater clinical and scientific attention. Such programs and their effectiveness have become evidence-based for the elderly (for example in fall prevention) (5) and are now being expanded to include other target groups and indications (for example in sports-associated concussion or high-performance sports) (1).

Interdisciplinary Sports-Medicine as a Challenge

I hope that, in the coming decades, we will not only continue but increasingly practice the spirit of interdisciplinary inter-collegial sports medicine. We are faced with enormous tasks, but sufficient approaches, both clinical and scientific, are available through the manifold indications and therapy effects. It is up to us to accept and resolve this challenge.

So I hope that we will meet during this Summit, talk with one another and experience interdisciplinary sports medicine as colleagues.

Reference


