

NO CLINICIAN IS AN ISLAND



Football is the world's most popular sport. The beautiful game develops at an astonishing rate both on and off the field. This presents a challenge to those of us who provide medical care for football players – how on earth do we keep up?

Football medicine and science has undergone its own rapid progression in the last decade, as we strive to prepare players for the rigorous demands of modern football, prevent them from suffering injuries, and return them to the field as safely and efficiently as possible if they do.

The literature has supported this growth, with an abundance of new research in football. But despite this, we have not seen any significant decrease in the number of football injuries. One problem these studies often encounter is the limited number of subjects, which impedes meaningful conclusions that can be transferred directly to the pitch.

Scientists, clinicians and researchers are collecting data in their clubs worldwide, but each of them only has access to a set number of players and thus a finite amount of data. In a sense, they are series of islands; isolated and each with limited resources.

The solution is clear: the international football family must build bridges to connect these islands. By sharing with each other we can build large databases, giving us access to powerful predictive analytics, which will let us make better informed decisions about how to keep our players healthy, how to treat their injuries and how best to return them to play.

This scenario may become a reality sooner than we think. We must prepare by adopting the mantra that *no clinician is an island*, and begin to consider the workings and protocols of such a system – how we can integrate data from around the world into large-scale collaborative projects?

At the Aspetar Sports Medicine Journal, we are committed to connecting people by bringing our readers the perspectives of experts from around the world. Five years on from our first Targeted Topic on Sports Medicine in Football, we have returned to examine how science and medicine have kept pace with the Football (R)Evolution.

Our Guest Editors, doctors Alan McCall, Celeste Geertsema and Clare Ardern, have assembled a team of authors who offer specialist insights from all corners of the globe and every aspect of the game. I thank all of them for their valuable contributions to this wonderful issue, and I hope you enjoy reading it.

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