The Galle Medical Journal

Journal of the Galle Medical Association

Volume 26 Number 2 June 2021

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ISSN 1391-7072

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Editorial

Towards frontiers of human endurance: Evolving role of sports medicine

We are on the verge of the greatest sporting celebration of the world - the Summer Olympics 2020, delayed for one full-year due to the unfortunate COVID-19 pandemic. Sport stretches the physical endurance of men and women to the maximum. The demand on the type and level of endurance varies from sport to sport and within a given sport from event to event.

In their paper on the physiological profile of male long-distance runners and sprinters, Wijayasiri *et al.*, focuses on Sri Lankan athletes of two different types of running events and their cardiopulmonary fitness. Structured exercise and training bring about enhanced performance. The use of unauthorized enhancement medication with the connivance of medical doctors, sport bodies and in some instances states has become a dangerous trend in the world. It is abhorrent from a sporting perspective; unethical from a professional perspective and harmful to health of athletes from a medical perspective.

The discipline of sports medicine has evolved with integration of many facets of care of sportsmen and sportswomen with roles in injury prevention and restoration of function of the injured, so that they can get moving as soon as possible. It also focuses on medical conditions that occur during or following sporting activity. Sports medicine brings together disciplines of internal medicine, emergency medicine, orthopaedics and many others. It also involves inputs from other healthcare professionals as well, *e.g.* physiotherapists, professional trainers, nutritionists etc.

The sports physicians have got to surmount ethical challenges as well. The traditional ethical notions of confidentiality and autonomy are often challenged by multiple stake holders in sport.ⁱ This undue influence is variable in different situations and often has a pecuniary background.

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ⁱ Greenfield BH, West CR. Ethical issues in sports medicine: a review and justification for ethical decision making and reasoning. *Sports Health*. 2012; **4**(6): 475-479