

MDT and the Athlete

Allan Besselink, PT, Dip. MDT and Greg Lynch, Dip. Phyt, Dip. MDT, Dip. MT, MPNZ, MNZCP

The 13th McKenzie Institute International Conference in Copenhagen was the first time that a pre-conference workshop was included in the program for an international conference. The workshop, entitled “MDT and the Athlete”, was developed and presented by Allan Besselink (USA), Greg Lynch (NZ) and Ole Meyer (Denmark). The two sessions sold out almost as quickly as they were posted resulting in a total of 89 participants from 23 countries.

With a comprehensive manual, the four hour workshop emphasised the application of MDT to the athletic and sporting population. It was divided into sections that addressed the broad scope of sports medicine and training followed by an introduction to the relevance of MDT for the athlete, assessment and treatment, recovery of function, and prevention. Case studies and role playing scenarios were utilized to further emphasise the assessment and management process.

Group discussion addressed not only the challenges of the current sports medicine model, but also the potential role and challenges of applying and integrating MDT in sports medicine. Limitations of the current sports medicine model – much the same as the general orthopaedic community – are the emphasis on ‘imaging’ for diagnosis and management, reliance on orthopaedic special tests for diagnosis, and the foundation of a pathoanatomical model. As research has indicated, all of these areas have questionable reliability and validity, making MDT a natural choice for the assessment and treatment of sports-related injuries.

The value of MDT across the athletic spectrum – from injury to recovery of function, and training to injury prevention – was presented. Progression of forces – a cornerstone of MDT – has a perfect fit with the training continuum. Discussion focused on the progression of forces for athletes diagnosed with Derangement and progression of loading for Contractile Dysfunction in returning an athlete back to training and sport. The use of consistent MDT terminology can assist the clinician, athlete, and coach in guiding the athlete back to training and sport in a safe and efficient manner. The same terminology can also be used in a training context. The principles of MDT allow the athlete to manage their return and to be an active participant in the process. For those athletes who do not specifically fulfil the criteria for classification, the group discussed appropriate classification in the ‘OTHER’ sub-group along with how to manage these individuals according to their individual clinical and sport presentation.

The workshop is scheduled to be presented again as a Pre-Conference Workshop in conjunction with the 2016 McKenzie MDT Conference for the Americas in Miami. Facilitators will include Allan Besselink and Greg Lynch with support provided by Josh Kidd, PT, DPT, OCS, Dip. MDT, CSCS, Mathieu Sequin, BSc, PT, Cert. MDT, Cert. Sport Physio and Nicolas Turcotte, PT. Cert. MDT. The “MDT and the Athlete” workshop continues to evolve from its roots in Copenhagen, and we look forward to having you join us in Miami!

