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Football: the new drug in the fight against lifestyle diseases

Football: the new drug in the fight against lifestyle diseases"

England's poor performance at Euro 2016, declining grassroots football participation and The FA under pressure to reform; it all paints a sorry state of affairs for the national game. Despite this, football remains high on the agenda for development agencies.

In recent months Dr Dan Parnell, Research Director at ConnectSport, travelled to Denmark to meet Professor Peter Krstrup of the University of Copenhagen to discuss the role of team sports in health promotion. A key part of the conversation was the role of (i) professional football clubs and (ii) football as an activity in tackling lifestyle diseases.

Football and team sports are becoming a key interest for policy-makers and health professionals aiming to influence physical activity levels and tackle lifestyle diseases. This is a result of the growing amount of research on football and health.

This short article seeks to highlight the body of work undertaken by Peter and his colleagues. Peter's research has shown that football is an effective weapon against lifestyle diseases. Their research establishes the health effects of football for children, adult men and women, the elderly, and people with diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Peter provides an insight into his work in the video below which champions football as "an alternative to drugs in the fight against lifestyle diseases".

[//ku.23video.com/v.ihtml/player.html?source=share&photo%5fid=12458253](https://ku.23video.com/v.ihtml/player.html?source=share&photo%5fid=12458253)

Other related research:

Bangsbo, J., A. Junge, J. Dvorák, and P. Krstrup. 2014. "Executive Summary: Football for Health—Prevention and Treatment of Non-Communicable Diseases across the Lifespan through Football." *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports* 24 (S1): 147–150.

Hunt, K., S. Wyke, C.M. Gray, A.S. Anderson, A. Brady, C. Bunn, P.T. Donnon et al. 2014. "A Gender-sensitised Weight Loss and Healthy Living Programme for Overweight and Obese Men Delivered by Scottish Premier League Football Clubs (FFIT): A Pragmatic Randomised Controlled Trial." *The Lancet* 383: 1211–21. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(13)62420-4.

Krustrup, P., P. Aagaard, L. Nybo, J. Petersen, M. Mohr, J. Bangsbo. 2010. **“Recreational football as a health promoting activity: a topical review.”** *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science Sports* 20 (1): 1–13.

May, A. and D. Parnell. 2016. **“The community impact of football pitches: a case study of Maidstone United FC.”** *Sport in Society* DOI: 10.1080/17430437.2016.1173921

Mckenna, J., T. Quarmby, N. Kime, D. Parnell, and S. Zwolinsky. 2016. **“Lessons from the field for working in Healthy Stadia: physical activity practitioners reflect on ‘sport’.”** *Sport in Society* doi: 10.1080/17430437.2016.1173913

Milanović, Z., S. Pantelić, N. Čović, G. Sporiš, and P. Krustrup. 2015. **“Is Recreational Soccer Effective for Improving VO₂max A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.”** *Sports Medicine*45 (9): 1339-53.

Oja, P., S. Titze, S. Kokko, U.M. Kujala, A. Heinonen, P. Kelly, P. Koski, and C. Foster. 2015. **“Health benefits of different sport disciplines for adults: systematic review of observational and intervention studies with meta-analysis.”** *British Journal of Sports Medicine*49: 434–40.

Other related special editions

Bangsbo, J., P. Krustrup., and J. Dvorak. 2014. **“Special Issue: Football for Health – Prevention and Treatment of Non-Communicable Diseases across the Lifespan through Football.”** *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports* 24 (S1): 1.

Parnell, D., K. Curran, and M. Philpott. 2016. **“Healthy stadia: an insight from policy to practice.”** *Sport in Society* doi:10.1080/17430437.2016.1173914

Parnell, D., and A. Pringle. 2016. **“Football and Health Improvement: An Emerging Field.”***Soccer & Society* 17 (2): 171–174.

Parnell, D., and D. Richardson. 2014. **“Introduction: Football and Inclusivity.”** *Soccer & Society*15 (6): 823–7.

Dr Dan Parnell is Research Director at ***@ConnectSport*** and an active researcher and senior lecturer in Business Management at Manchester Metropolitan University. His research interests cover the sport and leisure sectors within the UK and he works globally on a number of projects, in particular the social role of sport. Contact ***d.parnell@mmu.ac.uk*** or follow ***@parnell daniel*** on Twitter or access his research ***here***.