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Your Prescription for Health
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EIMS NEWSLETTER

SPORTS THE YOUNGER THE BETTER?

By: Dr. Ivy Lim

Recently, new rules in the S-league sparked off heated debate after it was announced that there were plans to impose an age restriction on local soccer players, with local soccer clubs limited to signing only 5 players over the age of 30, while 3 players have to be aged 25 years old and below. This controversial rule was dropped a few weeks later. Anecdotally, we have heard of sporting clubs focusing on youth development, and writing off older athletes as 'has-been's. Is this really true? Are potential and performance really inversely related to age? If so, what is this 'magic age'?

Numerous research has been carried out on the relationship between age and performance. Some studies find no significant relation between age and performance. For example, a study done on professional baseball players show no differences in 10-yard sprint times or agility across any age group or position (Mangine GT, 2013). Another study done on marathon and half-marathon participants aged 20-79 showed that there is no significant age-related decline in performance before age 55, and that in fact a quarter of the 65- to 69-year-old runners were faster than half of the 20- to 54-year-old runners (Leyk D1, 2010).

Other studies have shown an age-related decline in performance. One study on triathletes showed a significant age effect on performance, although there was no significant difference in the overall race time between the ages of 18 and 34 (Etter F1, 2013). Other studies have also showed similar decreases in performance from the age of 35 (RC, 2007) (Tanaka H, 2008). However, a study done on ultra-marathoners showed that the average ages of the annual top ten fastest runners were 39.2±6.2 years for women and 37.2±6.1 years for men (Rüst CA1 K. B., 2013), higher than the expected 'magic age' of 35 as described in the other studies.

A study done on freestyle swimmers between 1994 and 2012 showed that the age of peak swimming speed in women increased in the 50-m distance from 18.9 to 20.4 years, but decreased in the 1500-m distance from 25.0 to 18.1 years. This suggested that even the 'magic age' changes with time (Rüst CA1, 2014).

From the start of the Olympics in 1896 to the London summer games in 2012, 126 athletes over the age of 50 have obtained 188 medals (50+ Olympic Medalists Infographic- Updated, 2012). These 126 athletes would have lost the chance to be an Olympic medallist had their national federations disallowed them from participating solely due to their age. Closer to home, Aleksandar Đurić made his international debut for Singapore in 2007 at the age of 37 years old. He is known for his professionalism and discipline, and is regarded as one of the best local footballers in his time up to his retirement from soccer in 2014.

In summary, age is not the deciding factor in sports performance, and should not be made so. An athlete's success is dependent on his or her talent and hard work, and to write off an athlete's potential based on his or her advancing age is ageism. Selections should be based on performance rather than chronological age alone.

ABOUT EIMS

Exercise Is Medicine Singapore (EIMS) is a programme spearheaded by Changi Sports Medicine Centre to make physical activity and exercise a standard part of preventing and treating diseases. Exercise is Medicine Singapore is the Singapore chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine's (ACSM) global Exercise is Medicine initiative . The national EIM Task Forces are grouped into regional centres, where Singapore's EIM Task Force falls under the Southeast Asia EIM Regional Centre.

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Interview with EIMS Ambassador

Ms. Look Xinqi
age 22

By: Ms. Loh Pei Shan

Q What led you to start exercising, was there any pivotal event?

A I have always been active since young and I guess it is also partly because of my competitive nature. My parents started me out with swimming and dance classes before I entered primary school. In primary school, I joined in the netball team and it was also then that I started running for endurance building as part of the training. It was in my competitive nature that I would run with the seniors on the team! It was only during my secondary school that formally ventured into track and field and as I am always looking to keep getting better, it spurred me onto consistent training. I believed that purpose turns into action; action turns into habit; habit decides character which in turn fixes destiny. Being active became a part of my lifestyle.

Q What exercise mean to you?

A As I usually engage in solitary forms of exercise, it is to me a challenge of the mind and body. It helps me to stay healthy, keep a balance in life. On different days, exercise means different things to me depending on what I set out to do. For example, it could be an easy run to get away from studying for long hours or it can be a timed long run that I used to challenge myself. Other times, it also serves as time for me to reflect and organize my thoughts and when my brother or friends join me, it is to catch up socially with them!

Q How has exercising regularly impacted medical management your of hip injury?

A I had my hip injury during the last year of my secondary school and I was devastated! Fortunately, I found guidance from Dr Roger Tian and the healthcare team in CGH Sports Medicine. There is still much misconception out there that when one is injured, no form of exercise should be undertaken. In fact, with the help of the physiotherapist and sports trainer, I had a very active recovery through strengthening exercise and other forms of aerobic training. By the time I recovered, I had only one month of formal training before I took part in the national track and field championship. I even qualified for the finals for all my events and placed in the top 6! It definitely would not have been possible if I just sat on the couch for five months. Being active kept me positive and looking forward to possibilities in the future. I have continued to train competitively since that day and made use of the skills I picked up during those days in rehabilitation to keep me injury free!

Q What advice would you recommend for individuals with similar medical conditions?

A I understand that it can be a huge hurdle to cross with the physical and even psychological pain. I had my dark days and I would tell them not to give up! If you are staring so hard at the door that just closed on you, you might not be seeing the other doors that have opened for you. I would recommend to first, understand what your injury is all about with a sports doctor who can advise you accordingly. Next, look into the type of exercises that you can still engage in. For example, if your hip is injured, you can still swim free-style concentrating on more upper body movement. Also, it helps to learn during this period things you can do to prevent such injuries again whether through strengthening, reviewing your exercise and recovery plan or equipment.

Q How would you encourage your peers who feel like they don't have the time, energy, or motivation to exercise?

A I can understand very well when someone tells me that they do not have the time, energy or motivation to exercise. We all know that exercise is good for your health and have other various benefits. Knowing that and doing something about it can be quite a leap.

I think one thing that helps very much is to identify a goal and a tangible end-point. I find that it helps me to have something to work towards like a race or an event. Then, come up with a plan. Always start out with something that is manageable then work your way up. For example, start with taking 30 minutes from 2 days of the week then slowly increasing it.

But what if you are not goal driven? I would encourage them to find a partner. Once you are accountable to turn up, it will give you an extra push to get those running shoes on!

There are always ways to be active whether taking the stairs or walking the two bus stops or parking just slightly further away.

In the end, I think the biggest obstacle might not be the time, energy or motivation. It is instead the will of the mind to make an active lifestyle work for you. I believe that if you think it is possible, you can make the possible come true!

Q What is your exercise and health related goals for the upcoming new year?

A I have recently taken on the half-marathon and look toward setting a personal best record by the end of the year.

Q How can EIMS doctors do a better job encouraging patients to exercise?

A Understand what the difficulties the patients have and identify the barriers to exercising. Provide suggestions tailored to their needs and interest. Finally, always be encouraging towards their goal of being more active whether in success or failure.

Q Why serve as an EIMS ambassador?

A I want people to see that being active can be done and that barriers are meant to broken down.

To learn more about our EIMS Ambassadors, see www.eims.sg/about-eims/ambassadors-of-eims

FUN FACTS

People who exercise as little as 15 minutes a day have a 14 percent lower mortality risk than people who don't exercise at all.

That statistic covers all causes of death, which translates at age 30 to a three-year increase in life expectancy. When it comes to cancer, those who work out 15 minutes daily are 10 percent less likely to die of it than those who don't exercise at all. Every additional 15 minutes of daily exercise reduces the all-cause mortality risk by another 4 percent and the cancer mortality risk by another 1 percent. "The best thing to do is to not get obese in the first place," Biggest Loser contestant Phil Parham, who coauthored The 90-Day Fitness Challenge with his wife and co-contestant, Amy Parham, tells The Daily Beast. "Once you've been big and you lose weight, your body always wants to regain that weight, so you're continuing to fight all your life."

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Greeting from EIMS TEACHING FACULTY

By: Dr. Fadzil Hamzah

On behalf of the EIMS teaching faculty, we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year.

The year 2014 has been busy yet fruitful for the EIM teaching faculty.

We have had a total of **8** courses locally for both **Primary Care Physicians** and **Clinical Fitness Professionals** throughout the year

with **22** doctors

35 clinical fitness professionals certified

EIMS has also travelled to Qatar, as part of our continuous international efforts to assist our overseas colleagues with the setting up of their own EIM teaching taskforce. In October 2014, we conducted the 2 courses consecutively in Aspetar, Qatar, which had a total of 30 participants; 14 of whom were practising doctors from various clinical specialties, and 16 clinical allied healthcare professionals comprising fitness trainers, physiotherapists, dietitians, podiatrists and nurses.

The year 2015 promises to be more fulfilling, with a total of 10 courses planned; the highlight of all being the course that will be conducted at the Singapore Expo in June 2015. This is in conjunction with SportFest Asia 2015, an event catered for the allied healthcare professionals locally as well as invitees internationally.

From 2015, the current EIMS Clinical Fitness Professionals' course shall be re-branded as EIMS Clinical Allied Healthcare Professionals' course, and plans to reach out to the physiotherapists and nurses, in addition to interested fitness trainers. The teaching faculty has also been expanding gradually as we have been inviting new experienced speakers to facilitate and share their knowledge with the participants.

As mentioned in the earlier newsletter, the EIMS course book has undergone a major facelift, with the revision of the current content and the addition of new and more clinically relevant topics in the syllabus. The second edition of the book is currently being published and the launch is expected to be in mid-April 2015. For more information on our courses as well as the various teaching resources, please kindly visit our website at www.eims.sg.

EIM INTERNATIONAL UPDATES

By: Dr. Mark Stoutenberg

In November, the Chinese International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Focal Point, which is the host for EIM China, in partnership with the Chinese CDC hosted a Physical Activity Conference for Health where EIM was the main theme. Representatives from Australia, Singapore, the UK, and the Global Center presented.

In the past 6 months, EIM has been established or is in the process of being established in Puerto Rico, Spain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, and Jordan. We are working with leaders in Japan to develop a National Center there.

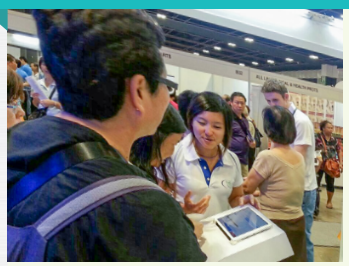
EIM Latin America held a Regional Meeting this August 2014 in Argentina for all the countries participating in their network – as a whole the network has trained more than 2,500 physicians throughout Latin America.

EIM USA is integrating the EIM Solution in the Greenville South Carolina Health System, one of the largest systems in the U.S. The official launch of EIM in this system will be in March 2015 at which time there the Physical Activity Vital Sign will be a part of their electronic medical records, patients will be given a specific order set and will be referred to professionals in the community who have received training for the EIM credential. This will be the first example of the EIM Solution anywhere in the world being adopted by an entire health system.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

2014 ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW

HEALTH & YOU EXHIBITION AT SUNTEC, 16 & 17 AUGUST 2014



BEIJING PHYS ACTIVITY CONF, 27 & 28 NOVEMBER 2014

EIM COURSE IN QATAR, 21 & 22 OCTOBER 2014

UPCOMING COURSE DATES:

EIMS CLINICAL FITNESS PROFESSIONALS COURSE

- 16 & 17 MAR 2015
- 11 & 12 JUN 2015

EIMS PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS COURSE

- 7 & 14 FEB 2015
- 11 & 18 APRIL 2015

UPCOMING EVENTS:

50PLUS EXPO 2015
- 27 - 28 MAR

SPORTS & FITNESS ASIA 2015
- 11 – 13 JUNE

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