New perspectives on Sports Sciences and SEM

Faced with the challenge of gaining sports science experience and exposure outside the confines of the books, researchers at the University of Bath have developed a new residential week of scientific exploration in SEM. Here, Dr Stuart Miller reports on the most recent event, held at the University in late January 2014.

Moving from a medical degree to a consultant has generally involved a spell rotating through the chosen specialty; learning the necessary clinical skills along the way and hopefully finding time for a research attachment to prove one’s credentials. As the specialties have grown, so has the depth of understanding and evidence to underpin what they do. General practice and SEM by their nature adopt a more varied approach, moving from a medical degree into a sports science department, that has itself equally embraced the partnership, allowing a synergy of development in both the teaching of SEM and also the focus of research. Scientific analysis and reflective practice has replaced more traditional ways of assessment and teaching, allowing those moving through SEM rotations and others, who will ultimately use sports medicine within another specialty, to truly understand what underpins clinical practice. In turn this enables valuable insight to be gained into how we should evaluate our practice or scrutinise the behaviour change we are using this week in sports nutrition, exercise interventions and psychological evaluation. With topics from gait analysis to physiological testing and psychological evaluation. With keynote lectures exposing students to evidence to underpin what we do should underpin our specialty so as it grows these strong roots sustain us.

Dr Stuart Miller

What past participants have said:

“I am studying the MSc Sport and Exercise Medicine at the University of Bath via distance learning. So far, it has provided me with a solid grounding in sports and exercise medicine, which is refining my day-to-day clinical practices. The clinical elements of the programme are the most rewarding and valuable to my own development. I have gained a multidisciplinary approach to injury, and I’ve also had an insight into the role of allied professionals.”

Emir Battaloglu, Trauma and Orthopaedic Registrar and MSc Sport & Exercise Medicine student

“The Clinical Week helps your examination skills and proves a unique opportunity to pick up ‘tricks of the trade’ from various members of the multidisciplinary team, including experienced SEM doctors, physiotherapists and osteopaths. The Residential Weeks are great fun and incredibly helpful for discussions online afterwards. The events are jam-packed full of learning, as well as a few social opportunities. Where else can you get access to sessions with world-class coaching staff to start your day?”

Nadia Vawda, GP and MSc Sport & Exercise Medicine student

This challenge to gain sports science exposure outside the confines of the books has been difficult over the years. It has led us here at Bath to develop a residential week of scientific exploration covering topics from gait analysis to physiological testing and psychological evaluation. With keynote lectures exposing students to sports nutrition, exercise interventions and behaviour change we are using this week to introduce students to jobbing scientists who can teach them how to undertake scientific reading and writing, so that they can be able to sift the real research from the ‘less robust’.

Add a few early morning sessions with elite sport coaches, teaching the basics of designing a training program for sprinters, rugby, volleyball and judo players, and finish off with a few social events to support the students as they plough their distance learning furrow complements a perfect week.

There has always been a challenge to gain enough knowledge to support clinical practice whilst still holding down a job. The distance learning aspect of the course, combined with clinical and science weeks, are one solution that we have embraced here at Bath. Others may feel that they would prefer to spend some time a little poorer but able to concentrate on their studies without distraction. Whichever road you plan to go down my plea would be to heed the word of science. Medicine may be an art but rigorous scientific evaluation and research into what we do should underpin our specialty so as it grows these strong roots sustain us.

Dr Stuart Miller

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