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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Sports medicine is a relatively new field or subsection of medicine. Although it has solid roots in the past, its existence is very much a part of the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Sports medicine is a growing field of employment due to the explosive expansion in sports and athletic activities. Not only are there the traditional high school, professional and amateur sports, there are also the “extreme” sports.

With every athletic event, there is risk of injury. In the instances of the so-called extreme versions, the likelihood of accidents and harm to the body increases. The focus of sports medicine is on the proper functioning of the human body during athletics and sporting competitions. Its concern is to prevent and treat any possible injuries resulting from such activities.

There is a demand for practitioners in the discipline of sports medicine. The need for people to be able to diagnose and manage sporting injuries is increasing proportionately to the interest in extreme, elite, professional amateur and recreational sports. Employers vary from professional team owners or managers to elite athletes to high schools and colleges. Anyone interested in pursuing a career in this field of study and work will find him or herself facing an ever-widening choice of possible employment.

The field of sports medicine is growing because it is a varied one. It is not a single sphere of expertise. The term “sports medicine” is a wide umbrella encompassing diverse professions. It is not a single profession. This makes the term hard to define, but it opens up many different doors of employment for now and in the future.

Where specifically does a specialist in sports medicine find work? The specialist works with athletes in the field and in a clinical setting. He or she may become a team physician or an athletic trainer. There are those in sport medicine who practice as orthopedic surgeons, exercise physiologists, biomechanists, physical therapists, sports psychologists and sports nutritionists. All have their own niche within this diverse subsection of medicine.

To become a member of the sports medicine team requires a certain character. At its basic is congeniality and someone with above average people skills. A person interested in becoming involved in most fields of sports medicine must like working with and being in the company of others. Daily interactions may involve meetings with officials, researchers, peers, athletes and family members.

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The job also demands the individual possess a specific set of learning skills. An interest in the sciences must go hand-in-hand with a concern in sports. There is also the need for education and, in many instances, more education. A person does not become a sports medicine professional or even a practitioner over night. It takes time, effort and plenty of energy.

The path to becoming a part of the sports medicine world requires dedication and an awareness of what and what not to do to reach the ultimate goal. It is not smooth or simple. It requires the individual to be aware of whom he or she is. Yet, understanding personal character is not enough. To reach the prerequisite level requires the ability to reduce the vast possibilities to a more singular focus.

Along the way, the candidate for a career in sports medicine must carefully hone his and her people and educational skills. A direction must be selected. After doing this, the individual must direct all energy, effort and drive towards achieving the final goal.

This book will not provide all the answers. No book can. The following pages will act, however, as a basic guide on how to get there. It will also provide some essential and informative information on the field of sports medicine. Some will be simple background material; other sections will focus on education and preparing yourself for the purpose of employment in sports medicine.

This e-book will begin simply. It will start at the beginning of sports medicine. In doing so, it will provide you with a brief look at the history and development of sports medicine over time.

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## 2

# **HISTORICALLY SPEAKING –A BRIEF HISTORY OF SPORTS MEDICINE**

While the history of sports medicine is recent, it does have antecedents that precede the current modern state. In fact, arguments provide evidence for the practice of a form of sports medicine throughout classical times. There are also indications that vestiges of this specific area of medical practice existed in India, China, and Persia and throughout parts of the Middle East. Texts and vestiges of diverse works relating to healthy exercise practices, sports and/or medicine mention the intermeshing aspects of and the possible harmonization the 2 areas.

## **EARLY PRACTITIONERS OF SPORTS MEDICINE**

The *Atharveda* or *Arthar-Veda*, (ca 6,000 B.C.) an early Indian text, contains some 6,000 lines describing specific healing or therapeutic exercises. Yet, it is not India's only claim to an early form of sports medicine. Sushruta (Susruta), an Indian physician, was the first known doctor to prescribe exercises. He worked at the University in Benares around 600 B.C. where he taught medicine and surgery. However, the favored so-called founders of sports medicine are generally noted to be rooted in Classical Greece.

The so-called Father of Sports Medicine is generally believed to have been the Greek, Herodicus of Selymbria (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) A teacher of sports, he began to study medicine. As a result, he developed a theory of the relationship between medical conditions and therapeutic exercises. Unfortunately, his student Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, did not completely share his beliefs. While there are no documents remaining to support his claim, the fragments quoted by other classical scholars clearly indicate the right of Herodicus to claim this position.

While there are successive and successful Greek claimants with writings linking sports and medicine, e.g. Plato, Socrates, the next individual commanding specific attention is Ikkos of Tarentum (444 B.C.E). He was another Greek with an interest in combining sports and medicine. He was

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a physical education teacher. He also, in fact, wrote the first known textbook on athletic training. However, it was not until Claudius Galen (131-201 A.D.) that a text coherently combined philosophy, medicine and exercise. He combined the different aspects together in his text, *Thrasylbulus*. The material comprising this book was gleaned partially from observation and directly from his work. Galen was responsible for maintaining the health of Roman gladiators. This makes Galen a candidate for being the first team doctor in recorded history. During the centuries that followed, medical authors borrowed heavily from the works of Galen and the Classical Greek and Roman scholars.

## **MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD**

After the decay and fall of the Roman Empire, in the West, little advances were made in the area of medicine, let alone in sports medicine. The Roman Catholic Church had a distinct way of regarding the human body and its workings. However, great advances in medicine in the East were to have an impact on the field. Ibn S'Ina, better known as Avicenna (980-1606) developed and wrote on certain healing exercises. Later, Girolamo Mercuriale or Hieronymus Mercurialis (1530-1606) offered his own vision and version of the medical aspects of physical exertion. He recorded them in his 8-volume work *Libri de Arte Gymnastica*.

## **MODERN TIMES AND MODERN HISTORY**

The modern history of sports medicine was a collaborative effort. Countries and individuals worked together and apart to develop the field. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, work in Germany and Switzerland pushed forward the idea of the two different areas of study working together. Van der Berg of Switzerland is touted for his work on cycling and the heart in 1906. Dresden, Germany boasts having several firsts in the early years of the century. These include first sports physician, first laboratory for the evaluation of athletic performers, first sports medicine journal and first sports medicine association. The term "sports medicine" was yet to be promulgated. There was not yet a cohesive comprehension of the ideals and approaches later declared to be integral to the practice of sports medicine. These were to come about in association with the famous sporting event – the Olympics.

In 1920, the Association Internationale Medico-Sportive (Association International of Sports Medicine) or AIMS came into being. This was the same year for the origin of the German Academy for Physical Exercise in Berlin. The German Association of Physicians for the Promotion of Physical Culture also began a scholarly periodical in 1924. This was the first recorded sports medicine journal.

In 1928, the group decided to hold a conference in Amsterdam, Holland in conjunction with the 9<sup>th</sup> Summer Olympic Games at St. Moritz, Switzerland. This first conference saw the attendance of some 280 sports

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physicians representing at least 20 countries. It was here, at the conference, that the term "sport medicine" came into accepted and more common usage. In fact, the conference bore the name of the International Congress of Sports Medicine. One of the most prominent members was Buytendijk of Switzerland.

The year 1930s and 1940s saw several advances made in the world of sports medicine. The AIMS changed its name to the Fédération Internationale Medico-Sportive et Scientifique (FIMS) in 1933 at a meeting in Chamoix, France. The Second International Congress took place in 1933 in Turin, Italy. It became the first general text in the United States for Sports Medicine.

In Germany, Dr. F. Hexheimer wrote the first book containing the words "sports medicine" in the title. This was the *Grundriss der Sportsmedizin*. The country also established the first outpatient department for sports medical outpatients in 1947. Meanwhile, in the United States, Dr. Augustus Thorndike of Harvard published his book *Athletic Injuries, Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment* in 1938. Dr. Jack Houghston established the Houghston Sports Medicine Hospital in 1949. It was the first of its kind in the United States

## **SPORTS MEDICINE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II**

After the Second World War, the interest in sports Medicine grew. In 1950, a sports medicine department was established at the university in Leipzig. In England, Sir Adolphe Abrahams and Sir Arthur Porritt founded the British Association of Sport and Medicine (BASM). By 1954, the Americans had begun to make their mark in this field of study. It started with the founding of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) in 1954. A Dr. Edward Hitchcock was teaching at Amherst College in 1954, the first instructor of physical education and hygiene. He also became the country's first sports medicine physician when he began to take care of the teams of his college.

By the end of the 1960s, several countries had established organizations focusing on the interconnection between sports and medicine. In 1960, the Jongbloed group had focused on basic research in the sports medicine field while, in 1962, J.P. G. Williams wrote the first English book with the words "Sports Medicine" in the title. It was called *Sports Medicine*. 1963 saw the creation of Sports Medicine Australia (SMA) as well as Sports Medicine New Zealand (SMNZ). An interest in medicine and sport was expressed in a series of articles published as part of a series written by Ernst Franz Jokl (1907-1997) and P. Jokl. Dr. Robert Kerlan joined forces with Dr. Jobe to create the South Western Orthopedic Medical Group. By 1985, this Group had become the Kerlan-Jobe Orthopedic Clinic.

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By the end of the decade, a Canadian, Dr. J. C. Kennedy, irrevocably linked sports and medicine together. In 1968, he attended the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City. He reported his observations on sports, athletic performance and medicine. In 1970, he went on to help found the Canadian Academy of Sports Medicine (CASM). In 1972, he proved the increasing acceptance of sports and medicine as a field of study when he was appointed the position of Chief Medical Officer of the very first acknowledged medical team at the Summer Olympics in Munich, Germany.

The advances in this direction continued throughout the 1970s. The first edition of an American Journal focusing on Sports Medicine was published in the 1970s. It was the child of Jack Hughston. He had been chair of the Committee of Sports Medicine first formed in 1964 as part of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS). The Committee evolved into the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM) by 1975. The AOSSM quickly emerged as a viable organ for the movement. It took over the responsibility of the newly named *American Journal of Sports Medicine (AJSM)* in 1974 under the advice of Hughston.

Yet, it was not until 1989 that the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) decided to recognize sports medicine as a legitimate subspecialty. Since then, such organizations as the ACSM have grown. Today, it consists of approximately 20,000 chapter members situated in places across the United States and around the globe. It has become one of the largest organizations focusing on sports medicine and the science of exercise. Other organizations and associations have since made sports medicine an expanding field of integrated interests. In 1981, the Arthroscopy Association of North America came into existence, as did the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) in 1991.

## **TIMELINE: SIGNIFICANT PERSONS, GROUPS AND DATES IN SPORTS MEDICINE HISTORY**

- 6,000 B.C. - The *Atharveda* (India)
- 600 B.C. - Sushruta (Susruta), an Indian physician
- 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. - Herodicus of Selymbria: Father of Sports Medicine
- 444 B.C.E - Ikkos of Tarentum -
- 131-201 - A.D. Claudius Galen - *Thrasylbulus*
- 980-1606 - Ibn S'Ina (Avicenna)
- 1530-1606 - Girolamo Mercuriale or Hieronymus Mercurialis - *Libri de Arte Gymnastica*

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- 1903 - Van der Berg of Switzerland work on cycling and the heart
- 1920 - the Association Internationale Medico-Sportive (International Association of Sports Medicine) or AIMS
- 1920 – first sports college with a sports medical curriculum in Berlin
- 1924 – the German Association of Physicians for the Promotion of Physical Culture publishes the first journal on sports medicine
- 1928 – First formal recognition of name at the first conference held by AIMS –The International Congress of Sports Medicine
- 1933 – AIMS renamed the Fèdèration Internationale Medico-Sportive et Scientifique or FIMS
- 1933 founding of American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS).
- 1933 – Second national congress of FIMS
- 1933 – *Grundriss der Sportmedizin* by Dr. F. Hexheimer contains the words “Sports Medicine” in title
- 1938 - Dr. Augustus Thorndike of Harvard - *Athletic Injuries, Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment* became standard text for sports medicine
- 1953 – founding of British Association of Sports and Medicine (BASM)
- 1954 - Standing Committee on Sports Injuries formed by the American Medical Association (AMA)
- 1954 – founding of American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)
- 1959 – The Standing Committee becomes the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Sports
- 1960 – Unesco’s International Council of Sport and Physical Education
- 1962 – J. P. Williams publishes first English book with “Sports Medicine” in the title: *Sports Medicine*
- 1963 - Sports Medicine Australia (SMA)
- 1963 – Sports Medicine New Zealand (SMNZ) founded
- 1962 - Committee of Sports Medicine - Jack Hughston, chair
- 1968 - Dr. J. C. Kennedy - Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City

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- 1970 – Canadian Academy of Sports Medicine (CASM)
- 1972 Dr. J. C. Kennedy Chief Medical Officer at Summer Olympics in Munich, Germany
- 1973 – Dr. Robert K. Kerlan and Dr. Frank Jobe open the highly acclaimed Kerlan-Jobe Orthopedics Clinics for sports medicine
- 1974 - *American Journal of Sports Medicine (AJSM)*
- 1975 – American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM)
- 1989 - the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) recognizes sports medicine as a sub-specialty
- 1992 – National Sports Medicine Institute of the United Kingdom
- 1994 – Sports Science Institute of South Africa
- 1995 – Combined Congress in Hong Kong of International Arthroscopy Association (IAA) and the International Society of the Knee (ISK)
- 1995 - IAA & ISK combine to form the International Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine ( ISAKOS)
- 2001 – founding of United Kingdom Association of Doctors in Sport (UKADS)

## **CONCLUSION**

While sports medicine is a recent development in the world of medicine. It is not a new concept. The history of sports medicine is closely allied with the development of medical practices of the ancient worlds of India, China, Persia, Greece and Rome. Many of the early physicians developed an interest in the relationship between athletic performance and medicine. Some focused on exercise and health. Others looked at specific links between health and athleticism.

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, developments were restricted. Many physicians built recited or built slightly on earlier findings. It was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the resurrection of the Olympic Games that the interest was revived in the interconnection between sports and medicine. Sports medicine began its journey towards acceptance as a medical sub-specialty during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The formation of various national and international organizations helped to increase the interest in the nature and character of this field of study.

Acceptance in 1989 by the American medical professional organization ABMS served to increase the impetus of has since resulted in a

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blossoming of individuals whose focus is on sports medicine. Today, the field of sports medicine is a burgeoning one. The next chapter will look at how to assess whether you are suitable for entering a career in this field.

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# 3

## **ASSESSING YOUR SUITABILITY AND ELIGIBILITY**

So, you want to work in sports medicine. Do you have what it takes? Do you know what it is? Are you suitable for a career in the field? These are basic questions you need to consider before you opt for what can be a long road. Becoming involved in sports medicine can be a rewarding career. It can also be time consuming and very demanding. This chapter will look at whether you are the right material – a good match, for a position in sports medicine. It begins with clarifying exactly what sports medicine is.

### **SPORTS MEDICINE – A BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITION**

Sports medicine is among the newest types of medical practices. It is a subspecialty that focuses on 2 inter-related aspects of modern life – physical exertion and medicine. Physical exertion describes and encompasses exercise, recreation and sports. It embraces the medical knowledge that comes into play on the different levels of a body in motion and exertion during sporting activities. In understanding this, sports medicine also considers the effect of age and even gender-specific aspects of sports.

Female athletes differ physically from male athletes. This includes the changing physiology that stretches over an individual's lifespan. The age of the player of any sport will also affect the way a practitioner or researcher in the field looks at the data and develops recommendations, training schedules and diet. The role of a sports medicine practitioner must vary in comprehension of these different and unique characteristics for gender and age. He or she would not expect to observe the same pattern of injuries in both an adult or mature athlete and a child or adolescent. Older persons also have their age-specific requirements. A sports medicine practitioner must be aware of all this and more.

A sports medicine practitioner is someone who observes the various types of sports and notices the effects of each kind on those who play. A sports

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medicine practitioner is also an individual who chooses and/or adapts to the player's milieu. In sports medicine, the professional must be ready to treat injuries and/or accidents that occur both on and off the field. The person in this area of medical practice must also be able to demonstrate how proper and even improper sports training can affect all members of the sporting community and the world beyond it.

As a result, being a sports medicine professional offers plenty of opportunities in various medical and medical-related fields. All concentrate on athletic performance, yet all are applicable beyond the scope of the professional sporting person's venue. While sport specific injuries may result in a somewhat narrow focus, the field of sports medicine, itself, is expansive in encompassing a wide variety of medical specialties. Diagnostic and surgical specialists exist in conjunction with athletic trainers. Rehabilitation coexists with field advice while training advice on physical exercise regimes shares the locker room with psychological assessments.

As a result, sports medicine is a multi-faceted discipline. There are many options and diverse routes to follow to become a member of this diverse group of professionals. It is up to the individual to decide what best suits him or her and which area of expertise will prove to be the right calling. However, before he or she embarks upon what can be a rewarding career, it is first necessary to look at the characteristics that are necessary to become a first-rate practitioner in the field of sports medicine.

## **CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

The first question to ask yourself is this: "Do you like working with people?" If the answer is, "No" go no further. Sports medicine professionals work with people on a daily basis. Depending upon the path a person takes, an average day might involve spending all day with several clients or only with 1.

A practitioner may come into regular contact with other people during his or her work. There are the families of athletes as well as patients and professional to meet and deal with on a regular basis. There are also colleagues and other professionals. You may be providing them with support or they may be seeking your expertise. Contrarily, you may be asking a peer for support or an opinion on a specific matter or case. Overall, excellent people skills are a very basic requirement of being a successful sports medicine professional.

Besides a pleasant disposition as part of a professional manner, the candidate for a spot in a sports medicine program must exhibit excellent interpersonal skills. These include:

- **Verbal Communication**

The ability to talk to people in a straightforward, confident,

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comprehensive and knowledgeable fashion – to communicate without “dumbing down” or convoluting the matter at hand

- **Written Communication**  
The ability to write clearly and effectively, to communicate what is required to the different personalities involved
- **Conflict management**  
Preventative and proactive ability to mediate between opposing views and needs
- **Sensitivity**  
To the needs of others
- **Ability to listen**  
To be able to actually hear what the other person is telling you, not what you think they should be telling you or what you want to hear
- **Intergroup dynamics**  
Comprehension of the basic workings of groups and associations, an awareness of how individuals react and interact in a group setting
- **A sense of how you fit into the overall scheme of the athlete’s world**  
Including life goals, training aspirations and both future and immediate needs

While you may be able to develop or improve on your innate personal skills and characteristics, it is essential you possess the basis – the very core at the beginning. If you lack them entirely, it would be better to go into a more solitary field such as research.

While not essential, it is also helpful if the individual has drive, energy and motivation. A sports medicine professional needs to know what he or she wants. The person must also have the energy to sustain the desire through the long course of education and training. Without the drive and the energy to complete the course (pun intended), the chances of going forth in the right direction successfully diminish considerably.

Motivation also plays an important role in obtaining the ultimate goal. An individual must really want to become a sports medicine professional. If he or she (or you) do not really want to achieve this result, it will not happen. The world of professional sports is full of motivated people. It is a necessary requirement if they want to become a successful player. The same is true for sports medicine. The motivating force must be strong, consistent and constant. Furthermore, possessing the motivation to become a sports medicine professional will help you understand the forces that compel an athlete to want to achieve at almost any cost.

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## **INTERESTS**

While assessing your capabilities to become a sports medicine professional, it is essential you look at all aspects of your life and lifestyle. This includes considering your own personal interests. What do you enjoy doing when you are at home, at school or in a chosen environment? What do you read, play or do in your spare time? Do you have any spare time?

There are certain core interests common to many historical and current sports medicine personalities. Among the most basic are these top 4: study/school favorites, reading materials, activities and volunteering. Your personal preferences or leanings will help indicate whether you are suited towards a career in sports medicine. It is not too early to ask these questions when you are in public school. It is more appropriate to do so, however, when you are ready to start high school.

The process of this type of self-discovery or self-exploration is simple. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. When at school, do you enjoy studying sciences? Are anatomy, studies of the body's needs, biology and physiology among your favorite subjects?
2. When you pick up a magazine, newspaper or book, what do you prefer to read? Do you turn immediately to articles on nutrition, science, sports and fitness? Do your eyes constantly wander from the latest news on the front page to the sports' section of a newspaper? Are your favorite journals or periodicals on sports and/or medical-related topics?
3. When you spend time on the internet what do you do searches on or research? Is it the latest musical trends, idle twitters or something related to sports and the demands it makes on the body?
4. Are you a part of a team or individual sport in school? Are you physically active? Do you enjoy planning an exercise program or trying out 1 from a magazine?
5. Where do you volunteer? Do you spend time at a hospital, a local medical clinic, a gym, a fitness center or an athletic field?

Answer the questions honestly. If you do love science classes, this is a good sign. If you combine this awareness with an interest in how the body works, it is even better. If you can add to this, an attraction to sports, it is a clear indication that a career in sports medicine is a distinct possibility.

Having a healthy curiosity about and interest in sports and the body is an important aspect of this field of study. It is not enough that an individual

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understands the anatomy and physical workings of the human body. In sports medicine, the person has to comprehend how the body acts during and training for a sporting event. It is also critical there is an insight into how a person involved in sports thinks and feels.

If an individual truly desires to know how an athlete “ticks,” the psychological awareness of sporting minds can help. It is critical to be able to consider more than your own point of view. Studying the subject, reading further on the topics helps gain knowledge on the academic level. Playing and volunteering in sports and medical-related fields provides a practical understanding. If the individual is able to add together the 2 related aspects of sports medicine, it will provide a solid basis upon which to build – to expand upon and grow. These are the very essentials the very foundations of what can become a successful career as a sports medicine practitioner.

## **INITIAL EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

Yet, even if you enjoy working with people, have the right type of personality and lean towards certain related interests, it is also essential to consider your current educational direction. If you do not have the right academic background, it may prevent, or at least slow down your chances to become involved in the sports medicine field. It is necessary to think ahead, to map out your educational strategy. You have to take the right subjects now in order to achieve the requirements for entry in the ideal college or university. You may think the path starts as soon as you start attending college. This is wrong. You need to prepare yourself the instant you step into your classes in high school. You need from the start to pick your courses wisely.

A high school diploma is a necessity these days for obtaining employment or heading on to college. At the high school level, you will need to focus on sciences. It is essential to have math in its many varied forms, but you need to take and shine in the science courses. Any course work focusing on human physiology will help. Most high schools offer classes in health and biology.

To find out what will help you make it to the next level of your goal, make an appointment with your school’s guidance counselor. Ask about college requirements. Maybe arrange to take an aptitude test to help confirm your ability to choose an appropriate career path. See if the counselor has any suggestions about course work or can recommend specific colleges.

If you wish to get another opinion, seek out a sports medicine practitioner or visit a sports clinic. A practitioner in either venue can help. Talk to them about their specialty. Discover how they got there and why they opted for this particular field of sports medicine. He or she will be able to provide some insight into what to take and how to go about it. A practitioner may be able to recommend a course of action. He or she can also suggest promising colleges to consider. If it is at all possible, talk to

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more than 1 sports medicine professional. It will help you gain some perspective on the diverse nature of the field. It may also provide you with guidance in what direction will work best for you.

## **INITIAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING**

It is an important part of managing your goal to know where you want to go. Early in your high school days, stop and compile a list of possible colleges. Talk to your guidance counselor and a sports practitioner. Compare their suggestions then set about doing your own research.

When looking at different schools remember this fact. The college you want to attend and the college you should attend may not be the same. Look at the various possibilities objectively. Focus on the admission requirements. Do not forget the financial cost. Look at financial assistance programs and find out the rate of placement for graduates of the specific programs. Be thorough even if this is an initial foray. Do start early but do not restrict yourself at this initial stage. A better prospect may come to light at a later date and/or after further research. Furthermore, what you find out initially may not be either feasible or fit in with your career focus at a later date.

## **CONCLUSION: A SUMMARY OF THE OVERALL REQUIREMENTS**

In order to be acceptable and to consider sports medicine a viable career option, the individual has to be able to meet certain requirements. They are as follows:

- Someone with a science background
- An individual who has an interest in sports
- A high school diploma with subjects in science
- A volunteer record in sports clubs and associations
- Time spent helping out in a health-related environment
- A person who enjoys working with people and helping them solve their problems
- An individual who has drive, energy and a clear understanding of who he or she is and where he or she want to go

The next chapter will look at how to take this basic knowledge a step further. It will focus on the different paths to becoming a member of the study and profession of sports medicine. It will examine the different career paths available and the educational possibilities. It will also explore some basic methods on how to realize the ultimate goal.

# 4

## **REACHING YOUR GOAL – DIFFERENT PATHS, DIFFERENT EDUCATION**

There are many different paths to follow to become a sports medicine professional. It is a complex field not a single entity. Many different types of medical professionals practice or focus on sports medicine. It is, as is often noted, a collection of different specialties or subspecialties and not a single or distinct practice. This makes it sometimes difficult to comprehend. At the same time, it makes it a delightful overabundance of possible career choices. To provide you an idea of what comprises the subspecialty known as sports medicine, simply look at the list of possible categories, a brief typology as it were.

### **TYOLOGY – AN EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES**

If you wish to become a professional in sports medicine, it helps to narrow down your area of interest or expertise. To begin the process, consider first a partial list of the disciplines practicing sports medicine and their base of operation.

#### **ATHLETIC TRAINER OR SPORTS THERAPIST**

- Works with the coaches, team physicians and others
- goal is to prevent and treat any sports-related injuries or illnesses

#### **BIOMECHANIC/KINSIOLOGIST**

- Works in clinics and in research facilities
- Applies the laws of physics to sports and physical activities

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## **CHIROPRACTOR**

- May work in a clinical setting, in the field or out of his or her office
- Treats joints and muscles

## **EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST**

- Traditionally worked with athletes, now may be found in a clinical or commercial setting
- Study the physiological responses of the human body to exercise and other forms of physical activity

## **FITNESS INSTRUCTOR/PERSONAL TRAINER**

- One-on-one work
- May go to the athlete's home, training facilities or gym

## **MASSAGE THERAPIST**

- May be found in a fitness or spa facility
- Tends to be one-on-one but can be hired for a team

## **NUTRITIONIST/SPORTS DIETICIAN**

- May work in a clinic, do research or perform on an individual consulting basis
- Relieve muscle pain, spasms, tension, fluid retention and other related physical problems

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## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST**

- Works in sports clinics or as consultants to professional sports organizations
- Focuses on the development of motor skills and dexterity

## **ORTHOPODIST**

- Often a specialty field within this musculoskeletal specialty
- Diagnoses and treats bone disorders and diseases
- Can work with a team or become an orthopedic surgeon

## **PHYSICAL THERAPIST**

- Provide evaluation and treatment of injuries
- Relieve pain and increase mobility
- Often concerned with rehabilitation regimes
- Work in sports clinics or as consultants to professional sports organizations

## **PODIATRIST**

- Focus is on the foot, ankle and other related parts
- Work in hospitals, private offices and clinics

## **RESEARCHER IN EXERCISE SCIENTIST**

- Usually found in research facilities
- Conducts studies using either a clinical or basic approach

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## **SPORTS MEDICINE PHYSICIAN/MEDICAL DOCTOR**

- Employed by teams but may also work in sports clinics
- Trained to diagnose and treat sport-related injuries

## **SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST**

- May work out of a home office or a clinic
- May be in the employ of an individual athlete or a team
- Focuses on the aspects of maintaining and achieving optimal mental health

## **STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACH**

- Work for athletic teams at all levels
- Intent is to enhance performance through developing training plans

## **MAJOR AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION IN SPORTS MEDICINE TODAY**

If you plan to become involved in sports medicine, a simple way of looking at the various options is this. Divide them into specific categories according to their approach or their focus. You can also analyze them in relation to the type of education they will require. Another method to simplify the various types is to consider the aspect of their focus – sports or science, applied research, fieldwork, or laboratory research. Below is one way of considering the various areas of specialization.

### **1. Coaching/training**

An active and practical application of the principles of sports medicine

### **2. Science of Exercise**

Focusing on the physical can be academic or practical in nature and/or application

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### **3. Physical And Athletic Training**

Hands-on work involving athletes. Field and clinical work

### **4. The Promotion Of Physical Health And Fitness**

A practical approach of academic subjects directed towards a larger audience or restricted to the select few clients

## **EDUCATIONAL POSSIBILITIES**

Educational requirements to enter university are specific. To become involved in the world of sports medicine, however, requires paying rigorous attention to detail. The intensity of the educational qualifications depends entirely upon the direction the individual decides to take. If you decide to become a sports doctor, be prepared to go beyond university to take a medical degree, an internship and even a specialized residency. At the very minimum, someone in the sports medicine field will require an academic degree in an accredited institution.

Your future does rely on you selecting the right university. You need to investigate the various college options available to you. Do your research on the internet, but also talk with actual persons involved in the field. This chapter will consider more of the process of getting into the right college and graduate studies in the next section. This portion of the chapter is focusing on the different routes for the different types of sports medicine.

You need to study the coursework offered by the college or university. The basic coursework for a sports medicine degree program should include sciences with a concentration on the mechanism of the human body. A general degree would include such things as psychology, nutrition, a history of sports and basic anatomy. A Bachelor of Science (BSc) is a basic requirement. The focus should be on applied health sciences as well as exercise science, adult fitness and general sports.

Those involved in furthering their education will also be considering such things as courses in such specific and more advanced courses as orthopedics, therapy, chiropractic applications, musculoskeletal injuries, genetics and sports-related or sports-specific injuries.

It is necessary to be completely aware of the basic criteria and/or educational requirements for each type of sports medicine. Some, such as Massage Therapist require completion and certification through a training program. Others demand at least a 4 or 5-year degree from an accredited college or university. These include Athletic Trainers, Fitness Instructors, Exercise Physiologists, and Physical Therapists. Nutritionists need an undergraduate degree followed by an internship while Occupational Therapists need an undergraduate degree and specialized coursework. Biomechanics specialists must have a Masters degree as do those who plan to be Strength and Conditioning Coaches. A PhD is the basic requirement of a chiropractor and for a researcher in Exercise Science. If you want to be an orthopedist, a podiatrist or a sports medicine doctor,

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you must finish medical school and do an internship. These fields also require taking coursework and doing “practicals” in the areas of specialization.

## **GETTING THERE – HOW TO REALIZE IT AND WHO TO GO TO FOR HELP**

When you do decide to go to university, plan far ahead. Give yourself plenty of opportunity and time to make the decision on the right school for your career. You will need to research thoroughly. There are several reasons for this. While many schools may offer courses on science or physiology, not all are related to or applicable to sports medicine.

Furthermore, certain types of sports medicine occupations are sticklers for where you obtain your degree or certificate. If you want to become an Athletic Trainer, you need to graduate from a college program approved by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Education Programs. If you plan to become a Sports Dietician or Nutritionist, you need your degree and a 9-month internship approved by the American Dietetics Association (ADS). The National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) recommend that all Strength and Training Coaches take part in the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist Program.

It is not difficult to find out what colleges, courses and universities are accredited and/or preferred. Talk to a guidance counsel, go on line and read the information provided on sports medicine careers. Read the American College of Sports Medicine’s (ACSM) directories. There is a graduate and undergraduate directory for you to consult.

All recommended sites and literature generally provide basic information on the educational requirements. Some go further. They provide a list of colleges to examine and specific descriptions of requirements and coursework. Some sites even provide you with links to associations and organizations.

Some organizations to consider in North America are the following:

- The American College of Sports Medicine
- The American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine
- The American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine
- The American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine
- The Canadian Academy of Sports Medicine
- The Institute for Preventive Sports Medicine

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- The American Massage Therapy Association
- The American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- The International Society of Biomechanics in Sport
- The National Strength and Conditioning Association
- World Council on Orthopaedic Sports Medicine

Doing online research is not enough. It is also not sufficient to speak only to a counselor, however, well informed he or she may be. Make sure you do speak to someone in the field. Go to a sports clinic or talk to a coach. Speak to a member of the specific association on line. They can help clarify the educational expectations of their organization and area of expertise. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask them. It is better you do so at the beginning before it is too late.

An excellent way to narrow down your choice is to visit the campus. See if there is an open house or prospective student day or week. If you go to the campus, you can connect with the different elements that will make the learning experience work in your favor. Talk to present students and faculty if possible. Sit in on a class. Collect any information and add it to your definite, maybe or "no way ever" list.

If you are uncertain about what fields to take or what direction to head in, consider "shadowing." Try to locate someone in any of the interested areas of sports medicine. Contact him or her. Ask if it is possible for you to arrange to be with him or her for a workday. This will give you a glimpse into what the work entails. In this way, you can decide for or against entering this particular field of sports medicine.

Shadowing a professional in the sports medicine field of your choice is beneficial in another way. It may provide you with a possible volunteer option or even part-time job. It is very important for you to add to your working knowledge. Education in school is important. Actual work or volunteer experience is as important. In fact, it will create a better impression and add depth to a *curriculum vita*.

If you want to volunteer or add to your status, there are a few approaches to take. You can adopt this approach while you are still in high school. You can carry them over into your college years. Take classes in first aid. Obtain your certificates from St. John's Ambulance, the Red Cross or an equivalent or similar organization. Take your knowledge and volunteer with the school's sports team. You do not have to be an athlete to become involved in sports activities.

Another method of improving your knowledge of sports medicine both before and during college is to attend seminars. Check in your area and see if there are any symposiums, conferences or seminars on sports

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medicine related topics. Sports Medicine groups post conferences and other gatherings online. Check the schedule and find out if you can attend. If it is restricted, perhaps you can volunteer to work at the symposium. This way you can attend. In some instances, you may even be employed to work the event, thus doubly benefitting from the experience.

The same type of benefits can accrue if you work for a newspaper. It will improve your writing. At university, the chance may expand to submit work for scholarly journals. Some schools publish their own scientific journals. Admittedly, most scholarly periodicals do not publish work from students in the lower levels. You can, however, offer to work with and research for a professor who is doing an article or study for a scholarly journal. By doing so, you may be able to obtain credit in the article as well as name recognition for when you actually submit an article. Below is a list of potential sports medicine journals. Several of them are located in North America while others are found in other countries around the world:

- *The British Journal of Sports Medicine* - Australia
- *The Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine* – Canada
- *The International Journal of Sports Medicine* – Germany
- *The Journal of Athletic Training* – United States
- *Journal of Orthopaedic and Sports Physical Therapy* – United States
- *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* – South Australia
- *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness* – The Netherlands
- *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine* – Turkey
- *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* – United States
- *Physical Therapy in Sport* – United Kingdom
- *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* – United States
- *Research in Sports Medicine: An International Journal* – Hong Kong
- *Sports Medicine* – United States
- *Sports Medicine and Arthroscopy Review* – United States

Working with and/or for a professor can be beneficial in other ways. It will gain you experience in a specific field relating to sports medicine. It should also gain you the support of your professor. This will come in handy when you need recommendations for higher learning or are out

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seeking employment. Your former professor or teacher can provide you with a glowing reference. This will add to the impression you are truly dedicated to and interested in working in the field of sports medicine.

## **CONCLUSION**

The vast variety of possible field in sports medicine makes it critical to carefully select the right course and the right university. Be thorough in your research. Explore all possible venues. Make sure the school is accredited and accepted by your specific sports medicine association or organization.

Talk to current and past students. Speak not once but several times to a guidance council. Make sure your options are clear. Contact the right sports associations. Go online and research, research, research. Make sure this university or college is right for you and acceptable to the field of sports medicine.

Before and during your schooling – both high school and college, do all that you can to prepare yourself for your chosen career in sports medicine. At the same time, do the extra work. Go that extra mile that will clearly set you apart from other candidates to this university and other levels of higher education as well as for future employers. Shadow someone working as a sports medicine practitioner. Take courses in first aid from recognized organizations. Volunteer to help-out with the athletic programs in some fashion. You do not have to play to be a team player.

Go to any extracurricular activities relating to your area of interest. This may be a symposium of specialists in the field. It could be a special seminar or a small regional or larger national conference. Do whatever it takes to develop your skills and indicate to others your interest and dedication to the field of sports medicine.

The next chapter looks at the job market. It will consider the various sources of employment, the available opportunities and provide several hints on how to land a job in sports medicine.

# 5

## **SO THIS IS YOUR CAREER – NOW WHAT**

You have made it. You have survived the grueling years in school. You may have even gone to graduate school and ventured further into an internship. Whatever your path, however long it took, you are now officially completed the formal aspect of your education and training. Now, what? Do you have any idea – a remote clue, of where to go or what to do.

The immediate answer to this question is “Find a job.” This chapter will look at the various jobs available in your career. It will provide suggestions on where to look. It will also offer various suggestions on how to land a job.

### **JOBS – THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT**

The field of sports medicine has several advantages over other careers and forms of employment. In choosing sports medicine as your career goal, you have given yourself the opportunity to decide where and how you want to work. This is because sports medicine provides its practitioners with choice. Professionals working in sports medicine have a choice of venue as well as setting. A sports person can work alone or with groups. He or she can choose to work either inside or outside. While much depends upon the specific type of sports medicine, there is still plenty of maneuverability and choice with the professions comprising this field of study.

There are 3 basic types comprising the essential character of sports medicine. They focus on the environment or venue of the work pattern. It is the simplest way to divide sports medicine within the broader scope of descriptive and highly volatile contents. It is too difficult to attempt to separate the broader scope along medical and medically-related lines. The most simple and effective way to look at the typology is to consider the basic work settings. In sports medicine, there are 3 basic types of work environment. These are the areas of research/theory, fieldwork and clinical applications.

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## **RESEARCH**

Research refers to those practitioners who prefer to work in classrooms or laboratories on the theoretical or potential practical application of sports medicine. These professionals focus on what is now and what may be possible.

In sports medicine, laboratory research is an essential part of finding better ways to ensure the body heals faster, moves more efficiently and comes to harm less frequently and with fewer consequences. Those who choose to work in laboratory settings have contact with peers, may work with animals, conduct experiments and prepare reports.

Theoretical applications of sports medicine may refer to those who remain in the laboratories. It can also refer to those who decide to teach. In high schools, universities and colleges across the United States and around the world, there are those who specialize in the theory of sports medicine. They help others learn what sports medicine is and how it applies to the modern world. These professionals must deal with their peers, students and parents. They may also be involved in the local sports teams and in sports medicine advances in the laboratory.

## **FIELDWORK**

Fieldwork can be the opposite of research. While it is true, some types of research require field trials, much goes on in the laboratory. Fieldwork, in this instance, refers to those who work with athletes on their own turf, or rink, or gym. A sports medicine professional may decide this is the milieu for him or her. He or she may prefer to apply his or her craft where the athletes are.

Someone who chooses to work in this environment will need to be prepared to deal on a regular basis with athletes, their coaches, managers and support groups. Owners, team managers, families and the media may all be environmental factors.

## **CLINICAL WORK**

Clinical work can combine fieldwork and research and, even, teaching. This type of sports medicine may also be strictly dealing with clients within the confines of a hospital, clinic or medical office. The practice could consist of the same clients on a regular or irregular basis. It may involve rehabilitation work or nutritional advice.

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Working in this type of setting brings the sports medicine professional in contact with a wide range of different people. Some of the daily contacts are others in the sports medicine business. Some are nurses, other doctors and specialists. There are also office support staff and the others who comprise the staffing demands of the average clinic. Someone in a clinical environment has patients who are athletes and those who may be in sport but are not pros or amateurs. Depending upon their status and situation, there are the individual's support staff, including manager, coach and family members.

Sports medicine is different from many other types of jobs or careers. While some of the jobs may be more limited in scope than others, many of the careers in sports medicine allow the practitioner to choose among the different settings. An Aerobics or group instructor may not find him or herself conducting classes in clinical trials or labs. Yet, the instructor may be able to choose whether to teach in clinics, hospitals, schools or industrial settings. He or she may be private or public. Not many careers offer so many choices.

## **BASIC EMPLOYERS**

The basic environment for those who practice sports medicine is the clinic, the lab or the field. The setting also indicates the possible employers of those in the profession. The following list consists of the more prominent or common categories of employers of employers in the field of sports medicine:

### **PROFESSIONAL SPORTS AND ITS ATHLETES**

The most prominent employer of sports medicine practitioners and the best known is the field of professional sports and its athletes. In this surrounding, the sports medicine professional may supply a number of services. He or she may be an employee of an athlete, a coach, a manager or a team owner. The employer may also be a committee such as the Olympic committee or that in charge of a specific athletic event.

The environment may be a clinic, a locker room, an office or a playing field. It can also be a combination of all of the above. It depends upon the terms of the employment, the specific needs of the athlete or employer and the type of sports medicine practiced or practices. For example, a dietician or sports psychologist may or may not make "field calls.

## **AMATEUR SPORTS**

Amateur sports are another large employer of practitioners of sports medicine. These include colleges, universities and high schools. These institutions may hire different types of sports medicine professionals. While some may restrict their involvement to the teams of the schools, others will also act as teachers, counselors, coaches and/or other related positions in this environment.

## **GOVERNMENTS**

The government hires sports medicine professionals at different levels. These may be for educational purposes. It can involve research facilities. There are specific committees and organizations within the government that may require the expertise of sports medicine professionals.

## **CLINICS**

There are various sports medicine clinics across the United States, North America and the world. There are also clinics that include a practitioner of sports medicine on the staff. Clinics devoted to sports medicine provide may also have part-time positions or offer office and/or research privileges.

## **SPORTS MEDICINE PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS**

It is impossible not to repeat this maxim. Sports Medicine is an area of employment in which there is a multiplicity of different types of employment. While all vary in intensity and direction, all are focused on ensuring quality care in the field of sports medicine. Below is a list and brief description of the most common positions in sports medicine as well as the possible employers and/or work environment. Understanding this will help you understand where to look for employment. It will narrow down the best possibilities.

- Aerobics Instructor - spas, clinics, hospitals, institutions, gyms
- Athletic Trainer – Amateur and professional sports teams, individual athletes
- Biomechanic – research settings, clinical sites
- Chiropractor – clinics, private office or facilities, hospital setting
- Exercise Physiologist – clinics, athletes, commercial settings

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- Fitness instructor/Personal Trainer – individual athletes, groups, gyms
- Massage Therapist – sports rehabilitation centers, hospitals, clinics, fitness centers, spas, individuals
- Nutritionist/Sports Dietician – universities, schools, athletes, clinics, hospitals, sports complexes, public health organizations
- Occupational Therapist – hospitals and clinics
- Orthopodist – clinics, hospitals
- Physical Therapist – hospitals, clinics, private offices
- Podiatrist – clinics, hospitals, private office
- Sports Psychologist – research, clinics, teams, sports complexes
- Strength and Conditioning Coach – teams – high school, college, university, professional

There is another reason for keeping in contact with the various associations. They can help you when it comes time to establishing your career. In order to practice in some of the fields of sports medicine, you need to have approval, certification or licenses. These associations are frequently responsible for the granting of the license. These associations may set the test. If this is a matter of state or national business, the association can best inform you of the rules and obligations of your craft for each state.

## **HINTS FOR THE SPORTS MEDICINE JOB HUNTER**

Once you decide on where to look for the jobs and know the possible employers, it can facilitate matters. You need to draw up a contact list. You also need to be systematic in your job search. Do not proceed in a haphazard matter. Do keep records of your job search.

While you may be planning on a career in sports medicine, at its basics, the job search process is not different from that for any job. You need to apply yourself in a regular and logical fashion. You need to compile lists. Most important of all – you need to have thought out the plan, established contacts and made the very basics movements towards obtaining employment long before you have graduated.

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During your years at school, you need to have done the following to make the job search easier:

- Joined or established connections with a number of organizations or associations in the field of your choice. Write them letters and submit articles to their publications. Make sure you are on the e-mail or mailing list of any or all of the following: The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), the American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine (AOADM), the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine (AAPSM), the Institute for Preventative Sports Medicine (IPSM), the International Association of Arthroscopy, Knee Surgery and Orthopedic Sports Medicine (IAAKSOSM), the International Federation of Sports Medicine (IFSM) and the Canadian Academy of Sports Medicine (CASM). There is also the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA), the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sports Psychology (AAASP) and the American Dietetics Association (ADA)
- Know the local journals – see Chapter 4 and try to be published
- Talk to your professors and instructors. Ask them for suggestions. Make contacts through them
- Put together a professional resume or CV
- Gain and list any and all work experience before after and during your tenure at school
- Be sure you establish a history of volunteerism in the right areas and maintain this while you are in school and applying for jobs. These can be very good contacts
- You are in sports medicine so do not forget to talk to and establish a relationship with the local clubs and sports association
- Talk up yourself to the local pool of athletes and volunteer at local sporting events to show what you are capable of doing
- Know who best to approach to establish your self
- If you are thinking about going it alone, have a solid business plan to present to the possible financiers.
- If you want to set up a clinic, talk to like-minded classmates and others in the sports program. This will permit you to spread the financing across many and provide a variety of services under a single roof

Searching for a job – any job, is about contacts. It is about whom you know and whom they may know. It is also about your education. It is

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about the marks you make - the type of school record that extends beyond the obvious educational aspects of learning.

Yet, job searches are also about hard work. You need to apply yourself. If you do not, nothing will happen. Check posted listings on the internet and in person. Look for openings listed in the periodicals and on the sites of the various associations. Phone, write, e-mail and apply.

Make sure you become members of various list services and internet groups. Yahoo, MSN and others can provide you with certain tools to ensure you make contacts with others.

## **CONCLUSION**

Finding a job in sports medicine is not a given. If you do not go out and use everything you have, you will probably not obtain a job, let alone the job of your dreams. You need to have established a list of potential jobs and a definite list of contacts long before you have graduated. You need to know about licenses and other state or national requirements.

If you not only talk to prospective clients and employers but also listen to professors, teachers, employers, and other sources, you should gain more than a book education during you time spent at school.

# 6

## CONCLUSION

The field of sports medicine is vibrant. It is one offering both opportunity and choice. Sports medicine is not a single entity, a lone profession or a solitary subspecialty. Sports medicine is full of variety. It is an umbrella providing a single name for a group with vastly different and/or wide-ranging skills.

If you want to become a sports medicine practitioner, you have to be gregarious. You need to be a good listener. You also must be self-aware of your potential and capabilities. Decide where you want to go, what you want to take and how to accomplish this before you leave high school.

You need to set the pace of your studies to include volunteering at the right kind of events and activities. You need also to establish a solid working relationship with your teachers/instructors. They may provide work possibilities and suggestions as where to apply for employment after graduation. They can indicate the organizations, associations and periodicals that could be helpful. They can even know about the trends within the field and the best directions to reach your goal. Plan well in advance but be adaptable. If you drive yourself in the right direction, you may be able to score the winning goal, the touchdown, the perfect score.