

In the June Issue

There is no doubt that the field of performing arts medicine continues to grow at a rapid pace. While the consistently high rate of injuries reported by musicians and dancers internationally drives the need for better injury prevention and management strategies, the increasing research and clinical knowledge base provides a platform for further advancements.

Preventing and protecting performing artists from injury during training and in their workplace has received even greater attention, particularly with the increasing number of well-documented policies relating to maintaining the wellness of performing artists. This includes the *Health and Safety Standard* for music teaching (from the American National Association of Schools of Music) and various health and safety recommendations for dancers. Occupational health also concerns theatre and visual artists, and this is discussed by **Tuisku et al.** in this issue, showing the challenge that lack of job security can have on the health of performers.

The typical injury causative factors of musculoskeletal overuse and misuse in performing artists require comprehensive evaluation to identify potential contributing risks to injury. Identifying these risks should include the input from the performing artist and his or her family, teacher(s), and health professionals. This approach is commonly recommended in sports medicine (DiFiori et al., 2014).¹ **Berque et al.** present the findings of a survey of orchestral musicians' injuries in Scotland using his well-designed and reliable assessment tool, the MPIIQM. Using such reliable tools to gather this information gives us more confidence in the findings

and points us further down the path of understanding injuries and their causes. This can then guide educational initiatives, which play a key role in empowering performing artists to specifically and effectively reduce risks in their training regimens.

Reluctance by performing artists to seek medical care, or even at times to adopt treatment approaches suggested by health experts, can at times be driven by a lack of understanding of physiological and psychological aspects of the disorder. The topic of embouchure assessment and management is still fearfully regarded among musicians, with some music websites suggesting that "over-analysis equals paralysis" in relation to understanding embouchure. While some musicians try to provide guides to recovery from the musical perspective, little scientific information exists to support the recovery of these players. Clearly, for this issue, problems in the facial muscles of brass players continue to be reported as a serious health issue facing these musicians (see **Storms et al.** and **Wallace et al.**). **Iltis et al.** also report on new technology allowing unique insight into the internal workings of a severe form of embouchure dysfunction, embouchure dystonia. This article provides improved understanding of these conditions and may lead to better approaches to their prevention and management.

In the study by **Zaferiou et al.** of dance kinematics in this issue, the combined technological output from force platforms and a 16-camera motion system shows the potential for biomechanics to provide translational research benefits. This study suggests that particular positioning of the legs in relation to the body facili-

tates balance during selected turns in ballet, with potential applications for teachers and for choreographers in designing their dance sequences.

A fundamental requirement of the body to be able to sustain performance is adequate nutrition and hydration, a topic that has received considerable attention and information in sports and dance literature. Surprisingly, this topic has to date received little attention in music medicine, perhaps due to the perceived sedentary nature of music-making compared to sport and dance. However, the endurance demands of musical performance have been shown to be very similar to submaximal athletes (Iñesta et al., 2008),² and hence nutrition may play a vital role in providing the necessary energy to safely sustain long hours of playing (Chan and Ackermann, 2014).³ In this issue, **Cizek et al.** report on factors affecting eating patterns of touring musicians and the challenges faced by these performers in accessing appropriate nutrition sources while on the road. Performing artists, when on tour, often arrive at a venue only a short while before commencing performances, often following a period of travel, and preparations beforehand may need to be made to organise adequate food supplies and/or cooking arrangements.

As the field of performing arts medicine continues to develop and grow, the breadth of research highlights the many aspects of health that may require attention in care of the performing artist. It is indeed a field that requires multidisciplinary input as well as interdisciplinary collaboration to continue to grow and flourish.

On a final note, I would like to call attention to the Abstracts section. Bill

Dawson began contributing this section to the journal in December 1998, and this issue marks the 71st instalment. It is also his final column. In that time, Bill has compiled approximately 640 papers from across the literature, from neuroscience journals to musician newsletters, reflecting the multidisciplinary reach of the field I just alluded to. We commend Bill Dawson on his extraordinary effort in collecting and selecting these papers, and we thank him for helping to bring

to light this disparate literature for the benefit of us all.

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1. DiFiori JP, et al. Overuse injuries and burnout in youth sports: a position statement from the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine. *Br J Sports Med* 2014; 48(4):287–288. doi: 10.1136/bjsports-2013-093299.

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3. Chan C, Ackermann B. Evidence-informed physical therapy management of performance-related musculoskeletal disorders in musicians. *Front Psychol* 2014; 5: art 706. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00706.

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