

Sports Chiropractic: Impact of Chiropractic Care on Athletes

World Federation of Chiropractic

13th WFC Global Education Conference

***Lifelong Learning: Advancing Chiropractic
Education for the Future***

October 14–17, 2026

Utrecht, the Netherlands.





Dr. Brian Nook is the Secretary-General of FICS and a sports chiropractor, educator, researcher, and academic leader with more than four decades of experience. He has supported athletes at multiple Olympic Games, All-Africa Games, and The World Games, while holding senior leadership positions at Murdoch University, Palmer College of Chiropractic West, and the Australian College of Physical Education.

Dr. Katie de Luca, PhD is Chair of the Research Commission of FICS and an Associate Professor at CQUniversity, Australia. A registered chiropractor, she is an accomplished researcher and educator. She has published extensively across musculoskeletal health and sports chiropractic, secured >\$6M competitive research funding, leads international research collaborations and supervises HDR students.

Learning Objectives

- ▶ By completion of this session, attendees will be able to
 - 1: Understand the prevalence and outcomes of chiropractic care for athletes.
 - 2: Appreciate sports chiropractic research opportunities with FICS
 - 3: Apply how sports chiropractic care may fit within a sports health team.
 - 4: Evaluate evidence-informed approaches for managing an athlete case.



FICS updates and information for educators



Outcomes of chiropractic care from The World Games



FICS Research Commission updates for educators



Sports Chiropractic Research Pathways



Multidisciplinary Athlete Management Exercise

International Federations FORUM SportAccord



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

OLYMPIC AGENDA

The detailed recommendations gives the international federations us a clear picture of what the future of the Olympic Movement will look like.

FICS Strategic Goals

Goal 2: Obtain IOC Recognition

Goal 5: Provide every athlete access to the highest quality of sports chiropractic at sporting events.





International Federations FORUM SportAccord

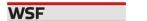
July 2025 FICS sign two important MoU's. "These collaboration with Olympic Sporting Federations are more than just a partnership; it's a reflection of the Olympic spirit in action. **Together, we are championing athlete health, well-being, and equity on the world stage.** By ensuring that all athletes, regardless of their nation's resources, have access to expert sport chiropractic care, we're helping create a more inclusive and supportive environment where every competitor can thrive. FICS is proud to stand with International Sporting Federations in advancing these values at the heart of international sport." Dr Martin Isaksson



**FICS President: Dr Martin Isaksson
speaking at SportAccord Forum**

FICS Role

- Integrate into multidisciplinary teams at sporting events
- Located in the warm-up area at venue assisting with preparation and recovery of athletes and other accredited individuals (Officials, Judges, Referees, Medical, Volunteers)
- Athletes are increasingly requesting access to chiropractic care as it assists their **performance** and **recovery**



Partner Scholarships

Turn Advanced Study Into Greater Impact

An opportunity for eligible FICS members to undertake Parker University's online Master of Science in Strength and Human Performance while continuing to build their professional contribution to sport.



2027 FICS x LOGAN UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

Turn Your Experience Into Greater Impact

A full-tuition postgraduate opportunity for eligible FICS members to advance their expertise through one of two Logan University online master's pathways.

[Download Application Form](#)



PATHWAY 02

Nutrition & Human Performance

Advanced nutrition knowledge for health, wellness, clinical practice and athletic performance.

PATHWAY 01

Sports Science & Rehabilitation

Online coursework with an in-person internship, focused on performance, injury prevention and rehabilitation.

Student and Recent Graduate FICS ICSC Scholarships



2027 FICS SCHOLARSHIPS

Student & Recent Graduate Scholarships

Develop your sports chiropractic knowledge, connect with mentors and contribute to the international FICS community.

Read the full details on how to prepare your application below, then click to download the application form once you have finished reading the requirements.

[Find your scholarship](#)

SEVEN AWARDS • THREE PATHWAYS

Find your scholarship

4

Student scholarships

Online ICSC learning

CHF 500 cash award

For students who have entered the final two years of their chiropractic degree.

[View eligibility and award details](#)

1

Emerging student scholarship

CHF 1,000 tuition support

FICS mentor

For students who have not yet entered the final two years of their degree.

[View eligibility and award details](#)

2

Recent graduate scholarships

First 6 ICSC modules

Mentoring connection

For qualified chiropractors with less than 12 months in clinical practice.

[View eligibility and award details](#)



WE HELP ATHLETES ACHIEVE THEIR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE NATURALLY

<https://fics.sport>

FICS Academic Champion at your Institution

YOUR NEXT CHAPTER

From Olympic athlete to chiropractor

The World Olympian Scholarship Program provides educational support for Olympians worldwide who are academically qualified and interested in pursuing a career in chiropractic. Established in 2001 following the Sydney 2000 Games, it connects athletes with participating educational institutions in the spirit of the Olympic Movement.

Through this program, Olympians can build on their sporting experience, pursue a chiropractic degree and give back to the profession that supported their athletic journey. Scholarship recipients serve as ambassadors for the Olympic Movement and chiropractic, sharing their experience of the profession's contribution to sport.

01

Who can apply

Athletes who have competed at Olympic level and are academically qualified for chiropractic study.

02

What it supports

Chiropractic education through participating institutions. Scholarship coverage and admission requirements depend on the institution and the award.

03

Where to begin

Complete the application, prepare your supporting documents and email them to the FICS administration team.

STUDY OPTIONS

Colleges and universities

The FICS application form lists nine institutions: seven in the United States, one in the United Kingdom and one in Canada.

- Life University
- Logan University
- Northwestern Health Sciences University
- National University of Health Sciences
- Parker University
- Texas Chiropractic College
- University of Western States
- McTimoney College of Chiropractic
- Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College

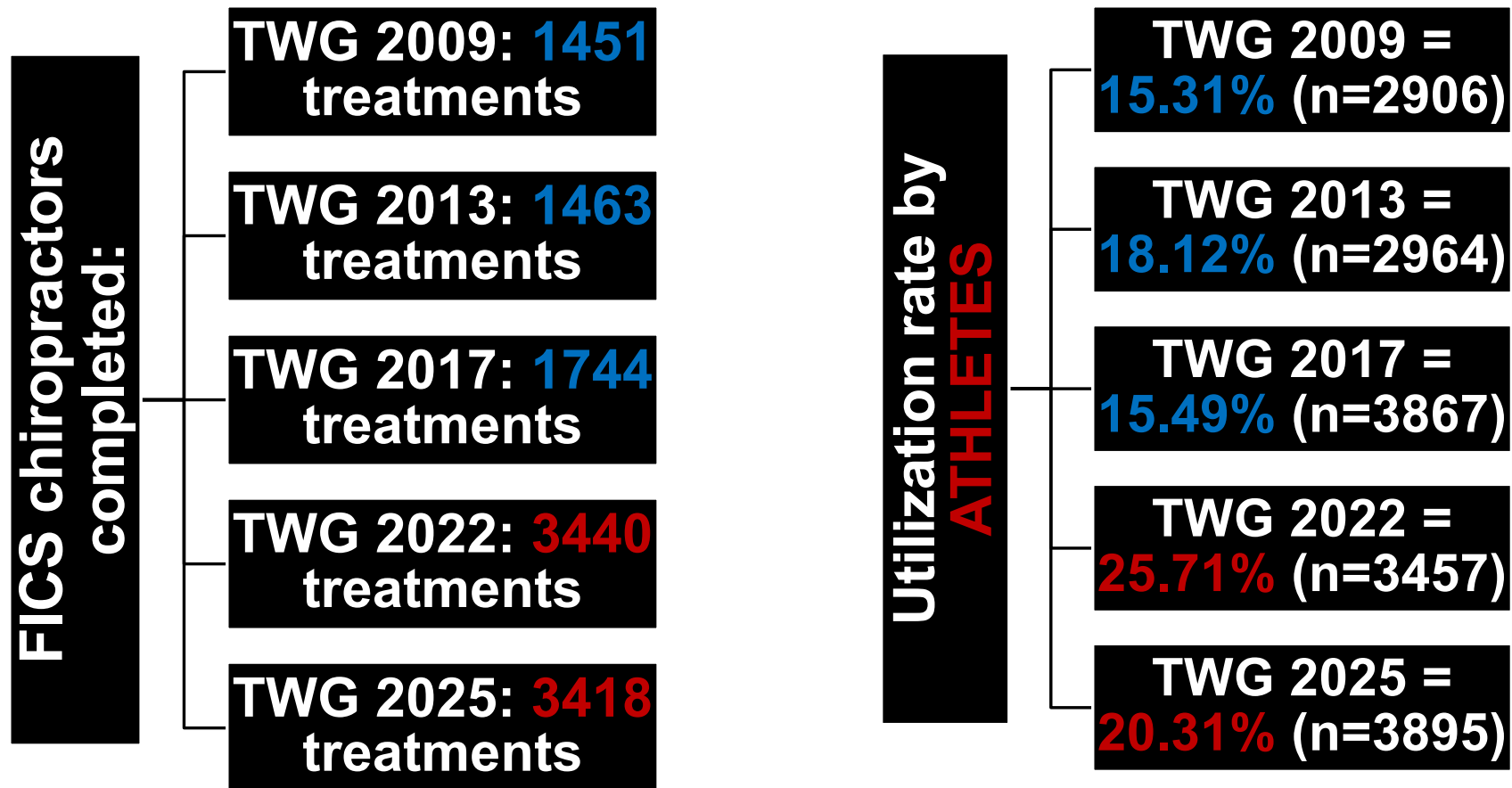
If your preferred institution is not listed, the application invites you to name it and explain why the listed colleges cannot support your needs, so FICS can consider approaching that institution.

FICS and the International World Games Association (IWGA)

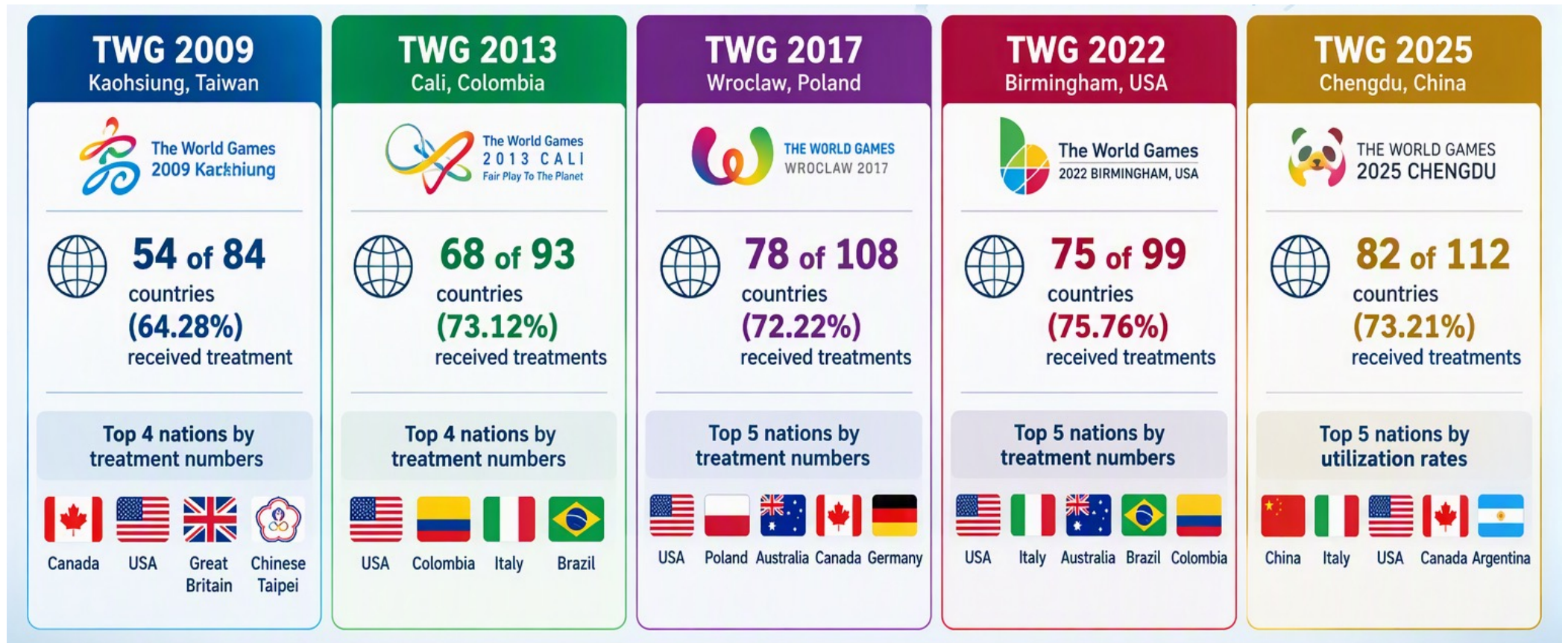
- ▶ 35 chiropractors from 13 countries and 4 researchers
2009 TWG Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
- ▶ 40 chiropractors from 11 countries and 6 researchers
the 2013 TWG in Cali, Colombia.
- ▶ 35 chiropractors from 13 countries and 5 researchers
2017 TWG Wroclaw, Poland
- ▶ 48 chiropractors from 11 countries, 5 researchers, & 1
Admin 2022 TWG Birmingham, Alabama, USA
- ▶ 48 chiropractors from 13 countries, 4 researchers, & 1
Admin 2025 TWG Changdu, China
- ▶ Accredited Athletes and non-athletes voluntarily
requested care from the FICS delegation.



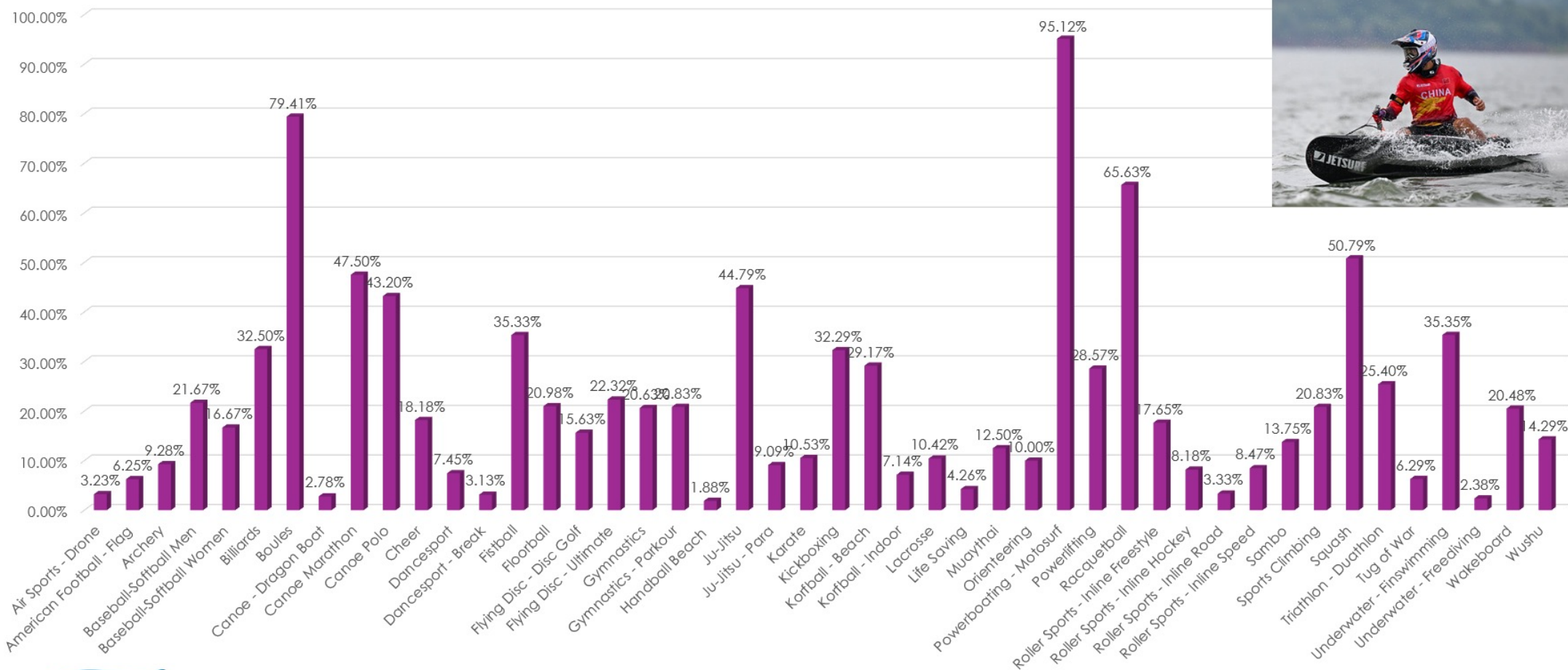
Results: Utilization-Athletes & Non-Athletes



Results: Countries



Results: % Individual Treated / Accredited Athletes by Sport



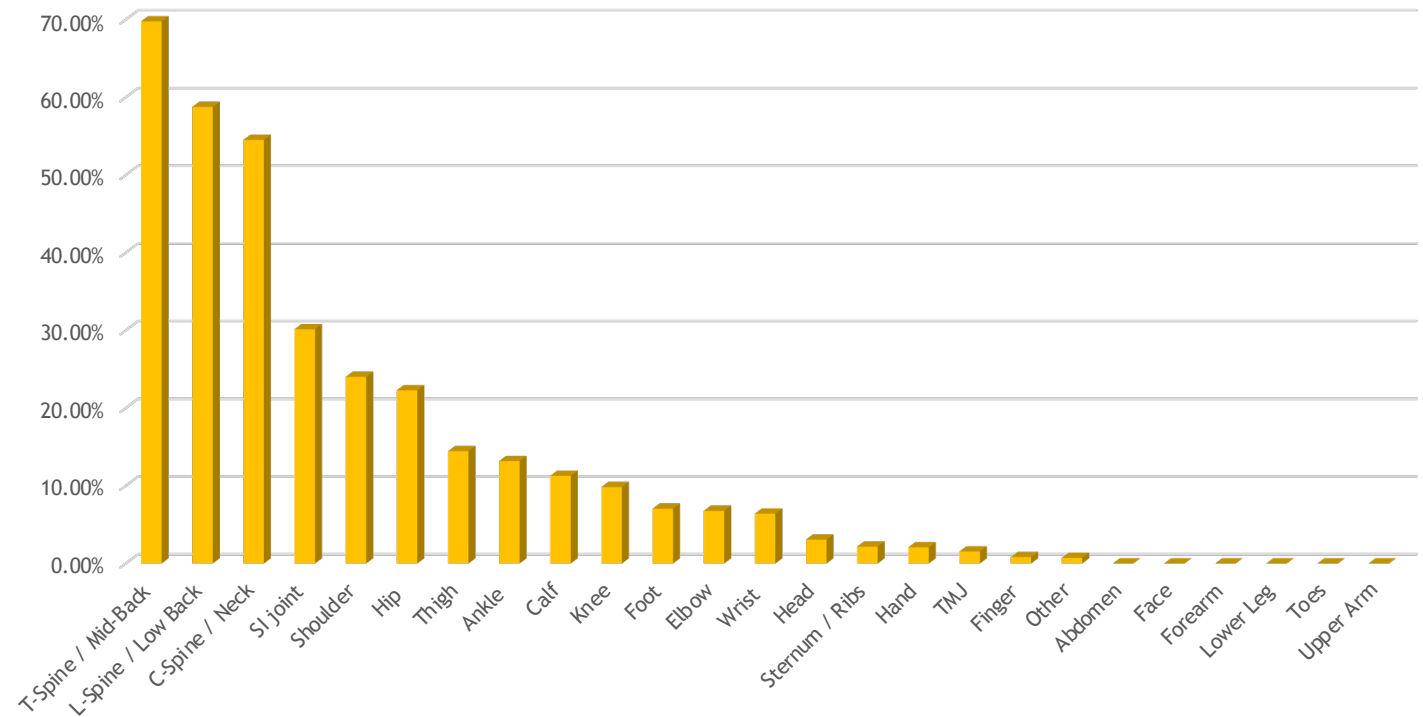
Results: Athlete body region treated

The **spine** was the most common area treated

- ▶ TWG 2009: **697 (46%)**
- ▶ TWG2013: **1299 (89%)**
- ▶ **TWG 2017: 1744 (45%)**
- ▶ **TWG 2022: 2814 (60%)**
- ▶ **TWG 2025 2362 (63%)**

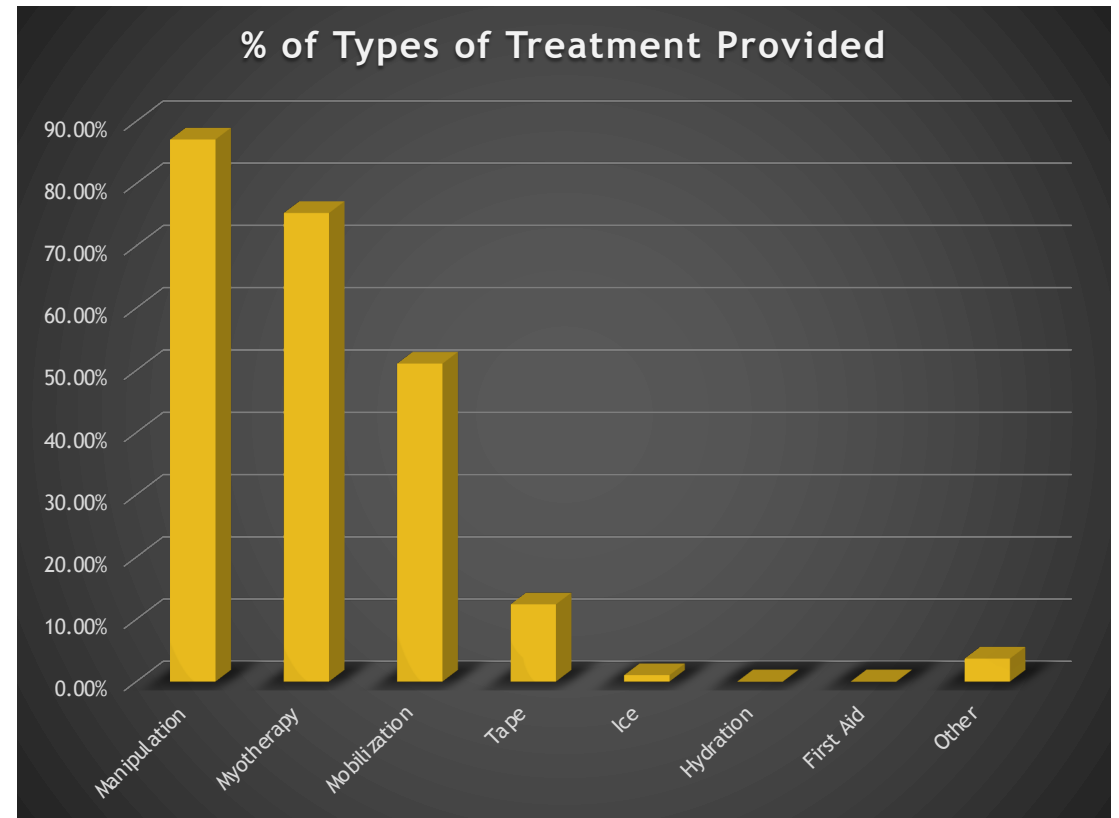


% of Anatomical Areas Treated / 1108 Treatments



Results: Treatment modality

Similar at all events, where **manipulation and myotherapy** were the most frequent modalities provided



Take home messages and discussion points

Comparisons of the TWG **2009, 2013, 2017, 2022, and 2025** show consistent usage rates by athletes and support personnel

>25% of all athletes (TWG 2022)
used chiropractic services at least once

How do we increase this?

Athletes from over **75% of the countries**
received treatments

How do we support
countries with minimal
healthcare support?

Take home messages and discussion points

Athletes from 100% of the sports received treatments at TWG2025.

What to do with this information?

The spine (lumbar, thoracic and cervical) was the treated most often.

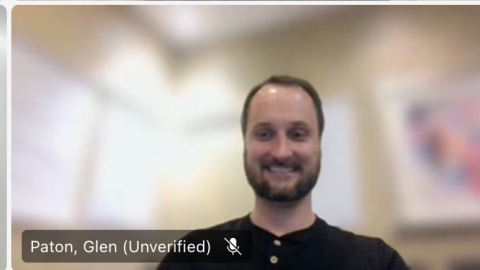
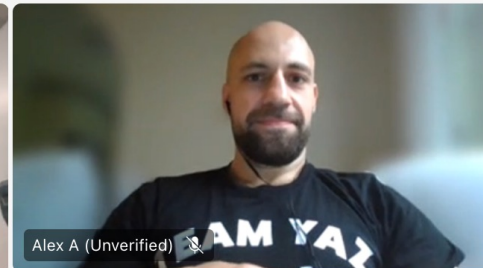
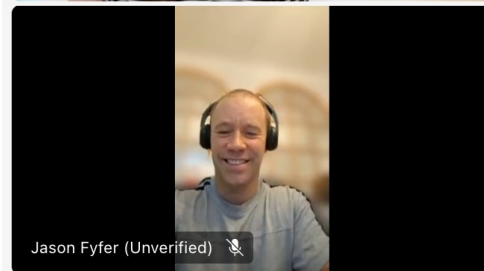
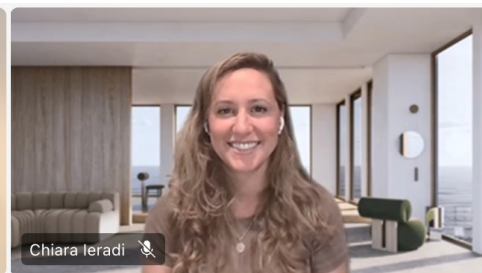
Is this what what to be known for - as sports chiropractors?

Athletes report change and high satisfaction

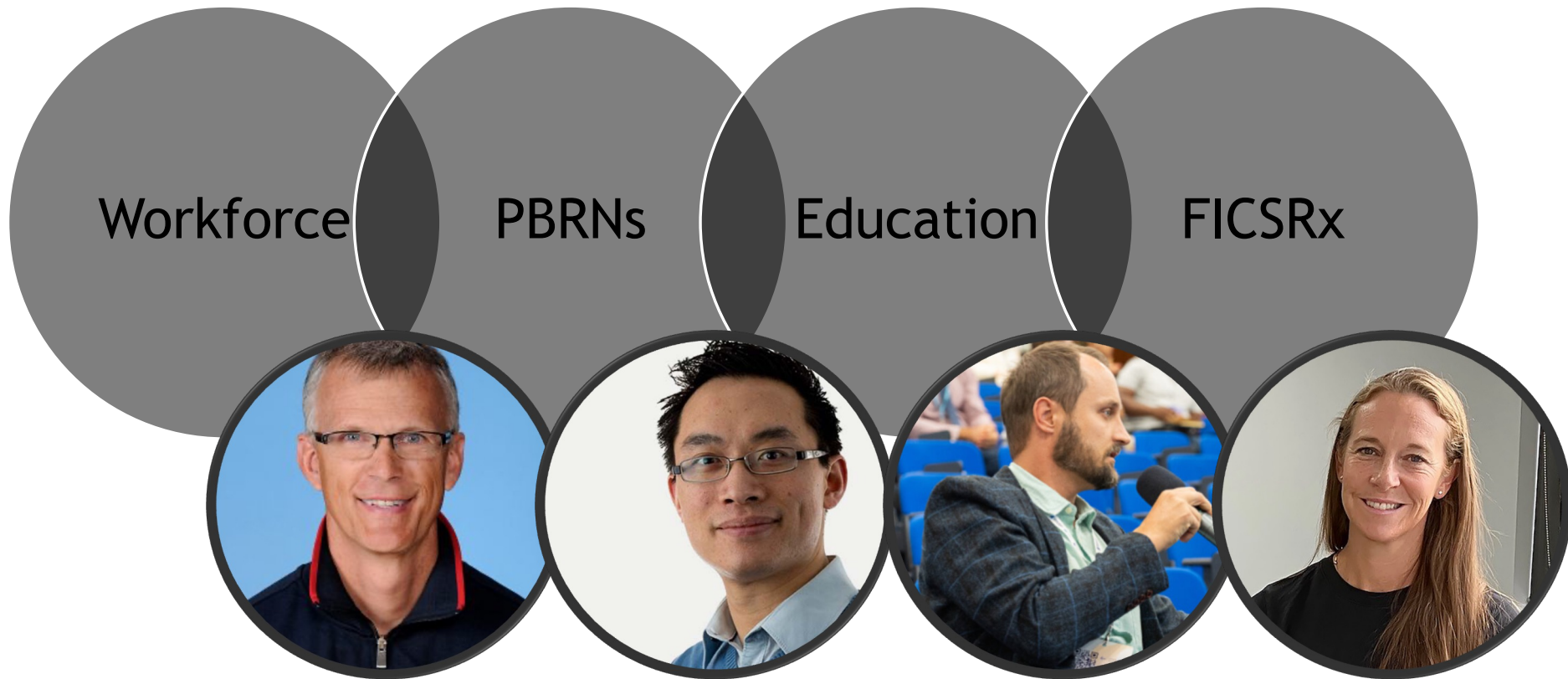
Our greatest contribution?

FICS Research Commission

- ▶ Exists to serve as a body of experts to advise FICS in evidence-based sports chiropractic as it relates to the practice of chiropractic.
- ▶ Undertake sports chiropractic research relevant to global stakeholders
- ▶ This may include, but not be limited to, the identification of priority areas in:
 - ▶ Injury epidemiology and surveillance,
 - ▶ Sports injury management,
 - ▶ Sports and human performance,
 - ▶ Practice-based research networks, and
 - ▶ Activities congruent with identified projects of FICS.



Sub Committees



Our work thus far



Existing support for SERCH and establishing PBRNs - nationally, internationally ?



FICRx database analyses



Defining scope of sports chiropractic practice



Improving Research Literacy - learning and readings list



Research Modules for FICS Education

A Defining Moment for Sports Chiropractic

- ▶ Growing role in sport & exercise medicine
- ▶ Reduce reliance on anecdotal practice
- ▶ Research remains fragmented due to
 - ▶ Limited funding and institutional support
 - ▶ Lack of centralised research collaboration



"We are already doing the work. The opportunity is to capture it, connect it, and translate it into evidence that shapes policy and progress."

- ▶ Impending workforce shortage of Sports Chiropractors for LA28, The World Games Events, and Brisbane 2032 Olympics etc

Learning from Canada: the Sports & Exercise Research Collaborative for Health (SERCH)

- ▶ A PBRN focused on sports chiropractic and musculoskeletal care, led by Dr. Alex Lee from CMCC
 - ▶ Chairs the Research & Education Committee (Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences, Canada)
- ▶ SERCH research is conducted inside the clinical setting
- ▶ Network of people (chiropractors, staff, practitioners) who make efforts to contribute data
- ▶ Focus is on advancing the sports chiropractic workforce through research infrastructure and capability.

FICRx database analyses

- ▶ Updating the treatment form to align with IOC injury reporting
- ▶ Beta testing, data validation and ethics approval
- ▶ Stakeholder reporting
- ▶ Procedures and protocols for data use

EVERY ATHLETE DESERVES ACCESS TO

Athlete care, doctor workflows, and event support

This is the kind of experience that makes us return home with the confidence reinforced that we (chiropractors) are an essential part of the athlete's health and performance

Consensus statement

OPEN ACCESS

International Olympic Committee consensus statement: methods for recording and reporting of epidemiological data on injury and illness in sport 2020 (including STROBE Extension for Sport Injury and Illness Surveillance (STROBE-SIIS))

Roald Bahr^{1,2}, Ben Clarsen^{1,3}, Wayne Derman⁴, Jiri Dvorak⁵, Carolyn A Emery^{6,7}, Caroline F Finch⁸, Martin Hägglund⁹, Astrid Junge^{10,11}, Simon Kemp^{12,13}, Karim M Khan^{14,15}, Stephen W Marshall¹⁶, Willem Meeuwisse^{17,18}, Margo Mountjoy^{19,20}, John W Orchard²¹, Babette Pluim^{22,23,24}, Kenneth L Quarrie^{25,26}, Bruce Reider²⁷, Martin Schwellnus²⁸, Torbjørn Soligard^{29,30}, Keith A Stokes^{31,32}, Toomas Timpka^{33,34}, Evert Verhagen³⁵, Abhinav Bindra³⁶, Richard Budgett²⁹, Lars Engebretsen^{1,29}, Uğur Erdener²⁹, Karim Chamari³⁷

ABSTRACT
Injury and illness surveillance, and epidemiological studies, are fundamental elements of concerted efforts to protect the health of the athlete. To encourage consistency in the definitions and methodology used, and to enable data across studies to be compared, research groups have published 11 sport-specific or setting-specific consensus statements on sports injury (and, eventually, illness) epidemiology to date. Our objective was to further strengthen consistency in data collection, injury definitions and research reporting through an updated set of recommendations for sports injury and illness studies, including a new Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) checklist extension. The IOC invited a working group of international experts to review relevant literature and provide recommendations. The procedure included an open online survey, several stages of text drafting and consultation by working groups and a 3-day consensus meeting in October 2019. This statement includes recommendations for data collection and research reporting covering key components: defining and classifying health problems; severity of health problems; capturing and reporting athlete exposure; expressing risk; burden of health problems; study population characteristics and data collection methods. Based on these, we also developed a new reporting guideline as a STROBE Extension—the STROBE Sports Injury and Illness Surveillance (STROBE-SIIS). The IOC encourages ongoing in- and out-of-competition surveillance programmes and studies to describe injury and illness trends and patterns, understand their causes and develop measures to protect the health of the athlete. Implementation of the methods outlined in this statement will advance consistency in data collection and research reporting.

INTRODUCTION
Injury and illness surveillance, and epidemiological studies are fundamental elements of concerted efforts to protect the health of the athlete. Carefully designed injury surveillance programmes, accurate data capture and careful analysis of data are building blocks for sports injury/illness prevention programmes. Important questions that sports injury and illness surveillance projects are designed to address include: What is the risk of an individual athlete sustaining an acute injury, developing an overuse injury or becoming ill in a given sport? Within a given sport, what is the typical pattern and severity of injuries and illnesses? How do injury rates in various sports compare? Do participant characteristics and factors within competition and training affect risk?

To encourage consistency in the definitions and methods used, and to enable data across studies to be compared, research teams have published 11 consensus papers on sports injury (and, eventually, illness) epidemiology. Most of them addressed specific sports—cricket,¹ football,² rugby union,³ rugby league,⁴ aquatic sports,⁵ tennis,⁶ athletics⁷ and horse racing.⁸ Two statements covered multi-sport events⁹ and mass-participation events (eg, marathon races).¹⁰

We now have more than a decade of experience with the existing recommendations. Sports epidemiology has advanced—with a new focus on overuse injuries and also on illnesses. Data collection and reporting methods have also advanced as data are being collected for routine surveillance or predefined observational or intervention studies in diverse settings, ranging from community to elite sports, from youth sports to the master's level, in able-bodied and athletes with disabilities and in team sports and individual sports. In 2005, when the first of these sports injury surveillance consensus statements was developed, there were no agreed on research reporting methods (eg, the EQUATOR Network was just holding its inaugural meeting). Many important research epidemiological issues

Additional material is published online only. To view, please visit the journal online (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2019-101969>).

For numbered affiliations see end of article.

Correspondence to Professor Roald Bahr, Oslo Sports Trauma Research Center, Department of Sports Medicine, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Østebø Oslo, Norway; roald@nhi.no

This article has been co-published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine.

Accepted 7 January 2020
Published Online First 18 February 2020

Check for updates

© Author(s) (or their employer(s)) 2020. Re-use permitted under CC BY-NC. No commercial re-use. See rights and permissions. Published by BMJ.

To cite: Bahr R, Clarsen B, Derman W, et al. *Br J Sports Med* 2020;54:372–389.

372

Bahr R, et al. *Br J Sports Med* 2020;54:372–389. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2019-101969

BMJ

CQUniversity Memorandum of Understanding

- ▶ Collaboration on activities that support the development and progress of international sport chiropractic communities in the context of the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games and world games such as The World Games.
- ▶ Collaboration on research activities that include but are not limited to: collection and analysis of sports injury surveillance data, quantitative surveys of FICS members and associated event personnel, access to sports chiropractic patient populations for qualitative enquiry and observational research capturing sport chiropractic practice.
- ▶ Collaborative applications for national and international grants and funding.
- ▶ Collaborative development and delivery of continuing professional development opportunities for sports chiropractors.
- ▶ Collaborative research opportunities that include graduate student research projects and supervision of research by higher degree candidates.
- ▶ Collaboration on potential joint consultancy and advisory projects.

Global sport partnership shoots for stars with CQU Chiropractic

01 September 2025



CQUniversity Chiropractic students assisted athletes at the recent Pro Pickleball Association tournament in Tweed Heads.

By Mary Bolling

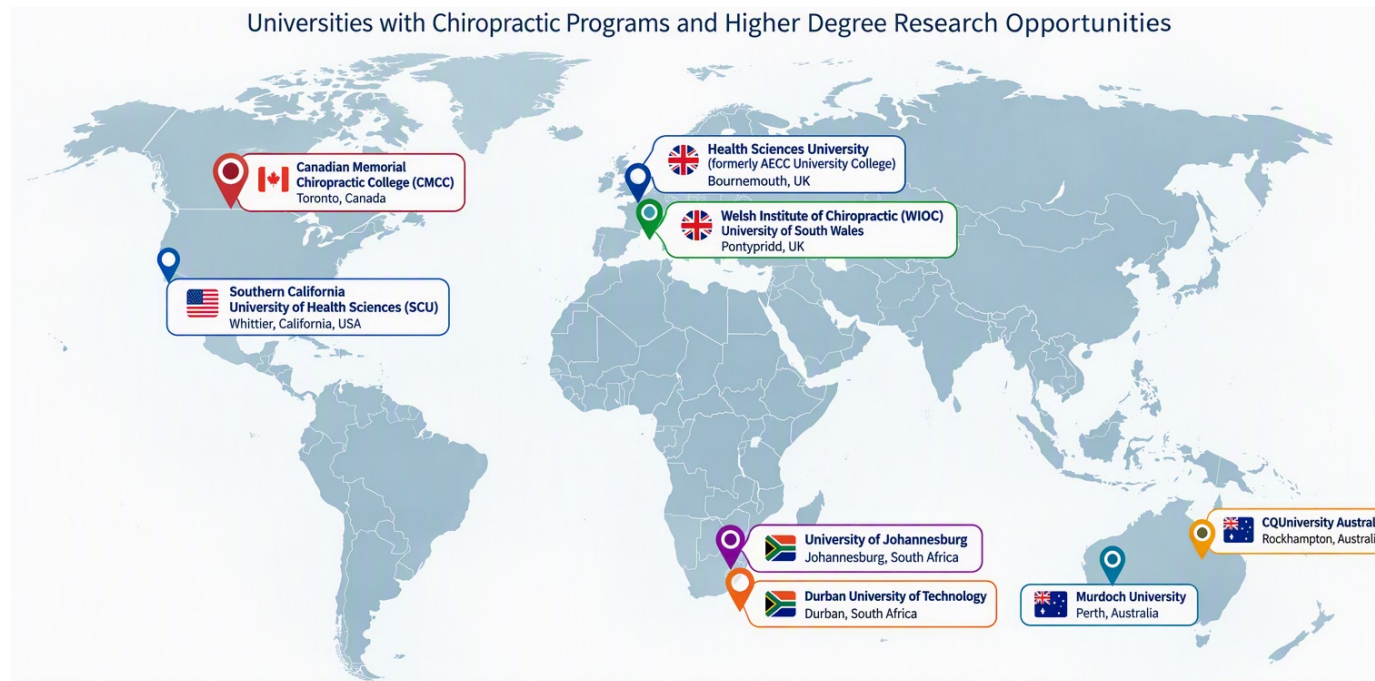
A new partnership between CQUniversity and the world body for sports chiropractors is set to shape education and training for chiropractors on the frontlines of elite sport – and ensure Australian athletes have world-class support as they approach Brisbane 2032.

CQUniversity and the Fédération Internationale de Chiropratique du Sport (International Federation of Sports Chiropractors, or FICS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, to advance research, education, and the development of future sports chiropractors.

CQU Associate Professor Katie de Luca is excited by the research-driven partnership.

"Collaborative research activities could include sports injury surveillance, surveys of FICS members and associated event personnel, studies of sports chiropractic patient populations, and qualitative enquiry and observational research capturing sport chiropractic practice," she said.

Research by Higher Degree



Research Capacity Building

Qualitative and observational studies of sports chiropractic practice

Sports injury and illness surveillance research

Translation of findings into clinical sports practice

Quantitative surveys of athletes, clinicians and event personnel

Strengthen global sports chiropractic networks and communities of practice

Why FICS Matters for Educators

1

Improving sports
chiropractors
research literacy

2

Developing
evidence based
sports
chiropractors

3

Creating student
and chiropractor
pathways into
international sport

4

Providing research
opportunities for
sports
chiropractors

5

Building the
workforce needed
for LA28 and
Brisbane 2032

Multidisciplinary Athlete Management Exercise

► Purpose

- Participants experience how a sports chiropractor contributes to athlete management within a multidisciplinary team while balancing evidence, athlete goals, and competition demands.

Games Scenario

- ▶ **Athlete:** 27-year-old female beach volleyball player
- ▶ **Current Event:** CSIT World Sports Games
- ▶ **Presenting Complaint:** Recurrent low back pain
- ▶ **Competition Schedule:**
 - Pool match in 48 hours
 - Quarter-final in 3 days
 - Potential medal match in 5 days

Games Scenario

Current Status:

- ▶ Pain has progressively worsened over the previous 4 weeks
- ▶ Pain during serving, attack jumps and repeated landing
- ▶ Pain is most consistently reproduced during lumbar extension and extension-rotation positions used in serving and spiking.
- ▶ Missed 3 training sessions in the previous 2 weeks
- ▶ Athlete reports feeling "stiffer" after long travel days.

Games Scenario

Current Status:

- ▶ MRI and X-ray show no serious pathology
 - ▶ No stress fracture detected.
 - ▶ No nerve root compression.
 - ▶ Mild disc bulging noted but considered clinically insignificant.
 - ▶ No red flags.

- ▶ Athlete concerned about competing and performing at their best
- ▶ Athlete requested advice regarding medication options for competition.
- ▶ Coach concerned about availability
- ▶ Athlete concerned about future selection

Athlete Management Meeting

- ▶ As a group, discuss athlete concerns, goals of care, evidence for management, and *professionals involved*.
- ▶ But who is involved ???

Role Allocation

- ▶ Sports Chiropractor
- ▶ Sports Doctor
- ▶ Sports Psychologist
- ▶ Coach
- ▶ Athlete

Role Position Statements



Key findings
Goals of care
Proposed
management,
recovery and
rehabilitation



Medical concerns
Medication review
Risk assessment



Psychological
safety
Mental Health
screening
Language,
isolation, barriers
to care



Team's highest
point scorers
Expected to start
every match
Critical to medal
chances



Has not been
completely
honest
Symptoms >3
months ago and
worsening
Personal concerns
and goals

Role Position Considerations



What unique value does the sports chiropractor contribute that complements, rather than duplicates, other team members?



At what point would you advise that the athlete should not compete?



Is this an environment where athletes feel comfortable?
What information shared while respecting athlete confidentiality?



How much risk is acceptable in a major competition?



How much information are you willing to share with the team?

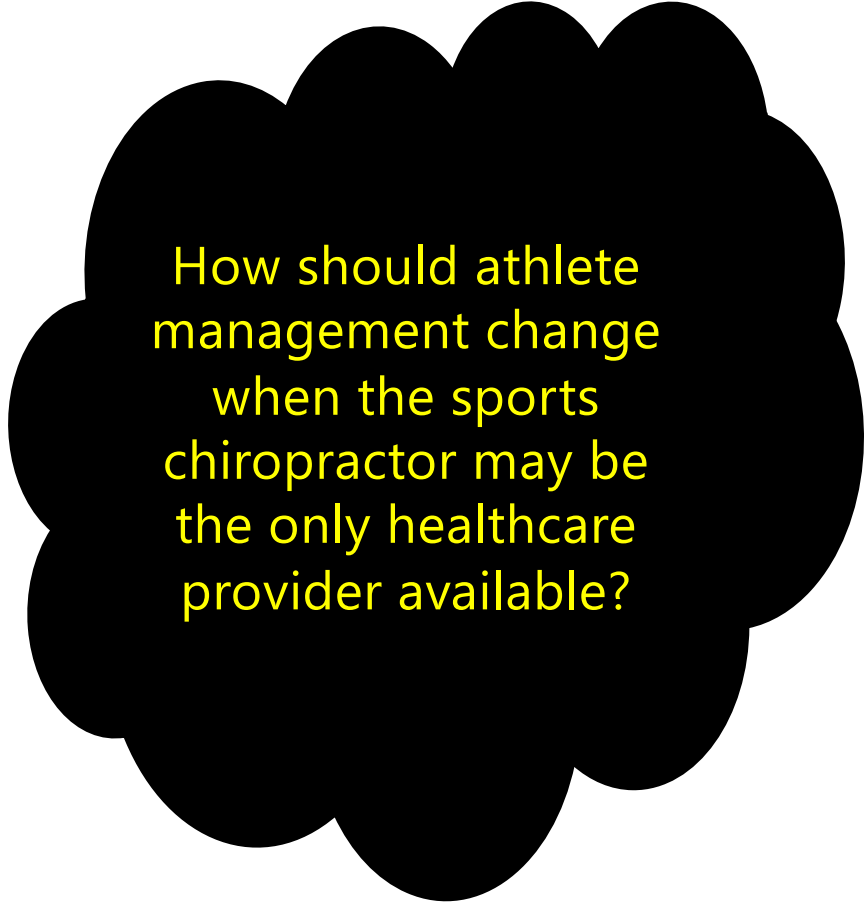
Components of inter-disciplinary care

- ▶ What are the three most important management priorities over the next 10 days of competition?
- ▶ What role will each professional play?
- ▶ Who provides the greatest value in this case?
- ▶ What information must be shared between team members?
- ▶ Does she return to play?

Or not ...

Many athletes and nations have:

- ▶ No travelling healthcare team
- ▶ Limited access to sports medicine services
- ▶ No imaging or specialist referral pathways
- ▶ No rehabilitation support
- ▶ Limited resources before, during, and after competition



How should athlete management change when the sports chiropractor may be the only healthcare provider available?

Athlete Health Equity

FICS helps support athletes and sporting organisations by:

- 🌐 Providing healthcare where little or none exists
- 🤝 Supporting athletes regardless of country or resources
- 🏃 Contributing to athlete availability, health and participation
- 📖 Delivering education, mentoring and capacity building
- 🏆 Supporting international events

What does sports
chiropractic look like
in resource-limited
environments ?

"Sports chiropractic is not only about multidisciplinary athlete management. At many international events, sports chiropractors help bridge gaps in healthcare access and contribute to more equitable support for athletes from all nations."



What is one action you will take back to your institution?

Introduce sports chiropractic research opportunities

Promote FICS education

Involve students in sports events

Encourage higher degree studies

Sports Chiropractic: Impact of Chiropractic Care on Athletes

