

SEPSIG 17 Newsletter

Volume 2



A brief overview

For those of you new to this space, welcome! Sports and Exercise Psychiatry Specialist Interest Group (SEPSIG) launched in 2016 with meetings twice a year since (barring a brief pandemic shaped interlude).

Conference topics have included 'Core Skills for a Sports Psychiatrist', Concussion, Injury and Mental Health, Cricket and Mental Health, Neurodiversity and Sport, Physical Activity and Mental Health and Overtraining Fatigue and Burnout.

The most recent conference (SEPSIG17) took place online in March...

SEPSIG 17

On the 19th March 2025 the 17th SEPSIG conference was held virtually, topics on the theme of social media in relation to elite athletes were discussed... the good, the bad and the ugly.

Before launching into the realm of social media our previous chair Dr Alan Currie provided a brief update on Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) criteria. He highlighted the stipulation that any treatment must 'restore health but no more'. He went on to explain that in practice, on the balance of probabilities, medications must not produce any additional enhancement of performance beyond return to the athlete's normal state of health.

Our current chair Dr Caz Nahman led with an introduction to social media in mental health. We were provided with a definition and a reminder of the history of social media; from the first email in 1971 to a billion Facebook users in 2012 and the launch of Tiktok in 2016. Dr Nahman spoke to the good (connectivity, information finding, social and mental health awareness to name a few), the bad (behavioural addictions, misinformation, amplification of emotional content) and the ugly (anonymity causing disinhibition, public shaming, cyber bullying and harassment) sides of social media and particular relevance to athletes as public figures.

As psychiatrists our patients are all impacted by social media so understanding the potential risks, benefits and impact on mental health is something relevant to all of psychiatry and although this focused on athletes, it shared important information for all of us.

To finish consideration was drawn to social media as a platform for athletes to make mental health disclosures and how this can raise awareness, reduce stigma, provide support but can also come with risks.



Next Kirsty Burrows from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) joined us live from Geneva to talk about harassment and abuse faced by athletes on social media and what the IOC are doing to tackle this.

Kirsty gave us an insight into the comprehensive and innovative mental wellbeing package devised for the Paris Olympics which included cyber abuse protection, welfare officers, a mind zone and a mentally fit helpline.

We were shocked to learn of the staggering number of verified abusive posts and comments (10.2k) made to athletes, teams or officials during the Paris Games. 92% of this abuse took place via X and included sexual (16.5%), sexism (17.09%) and racial (10.46%) abuse among others. The gender breakdown of the online abuse was 70.63% male, 29.27% female and 0.10% non-binary.

Donald Gillies, head of the women's program at Glasgow Rangers spoke next. Glasgow Rangers women's team have been professional since 2019. Due to concerns regarding sexism and misogyny the Scottish Football Supporters Association launched a #HerGameToo campaign in 2021 to tackle this head on. Through affiliated research they found that 1 in 4 women are exposed to sexist or misogynistic comments at football matches with a third receiving abuse online. Donald provided us with an insight into some of the challenges his team face and how, through strong clear club values, Rangers FC manages both the successes and pitfalls of the online world.

Following this we were treated to an exclusive pre-recorded interview with Eilish McColgan, the Scottish middle and long distance runner, four time Olympian for GB, British and European record holder and Commonwealth Games Champion. Eilish spoke about the level and nature of abuse that she experiences online, invariably related to her appearance and weight, rarely her performance. Why not delete your account some have asked? To this Eilish spoke passionately about calling out 'internet trolls' and about social media as a source of good as well as evil. Eilish uses the online world to connect with the running community, inspire the younger generation and, as an athlete in a minority sport, generate vital income streams.

Since speaking with us back in March Eilish has set a new Scottish Record at the London Marathon with her time of 2:23:25... congratulations Eilish!

Leuan Watkins, head of safeguarding at the UK Sports Institute (UKSI), gave the final talk of the day. The UKSI provides support services to British Olympic and Paralympic sports, enabling sports and athletes to realise potential and to achieve excellence. Leuan spoke about social media and safeguarding considerations as part of his commitment to provide a safe environment for all athletes.

Up next...

SEPSIG 18

CALL FOR
POSTERS

- **Where?** Royal College of Psychiatrists
- **When?** Monday 3 November 2025
- **Topic?** Trauma – the use of activity and exercise in managing trauma as well as the links between trauma and sport
- Some speakers are already confirmed but if you have experience in this field and could potentially present please get in touch
- Look out on the college website for further details including guest speakers and how to book tickets
- As always there will be a poster prize for student or trainee psychiatrists, submissions on the topic sports and exercise and sports psychiatry welcomed

Member activities

PACC and Moving Medicine:

The PACC (Physical Activity Clinical Champions) Team within Moving Medicine promotes physical activity in clinical care through peer-led training and evidence-based resources. They have developed specialist sessions on encouraging movement in patients with mental illness and are offering training to interested

clinicians.

Dr Will Wynter Bee is a Consultant in Sport and Exercise Medicine who actively promotes physical activity in healthcare. Through Moving Medicine, he helps develop practical, evidence-based tools for clinicians to support conversations about physical activity and has helped to train healthcare professionals across the UK to embed physical activity into routine care for prevention and management of long-term conditions.

SEPSIG are collaborating with Dr Will Wynter Bee, Sarah Durkin, and Paula Manning to advance the integration of sport, exercise, and physical activity into mental healthcare, strengthening cross-disciplinary efforts to improve patient outcomes.

SEPSIG's David Prossor recently had a successful meeting with PACC Coordinator Sarah Durkin, initiating a collaborative effort to enable mental health professionals to access PACC training. This aims to equip them with the confidence and skills to overcome barriers to physical activity in mental health settings. The PACC team is also exploring the delivery of a focused Mental Health and Movement workshop at the SEPSIG18 conference.

MIND charity:

Several members of SEPSIG contributed to the MIND charity 'Safe and Effective Practice' guidelines, available via the link below. These brand new guidelines aim to provide guidance to help level up physical activity and mental health provision across different settings. There are several physical activity toolkits available via the website.


[Safe and effective practice | Sport and mental health | Mind - Mind](#)


Journal of sports and exercise psychiatry

Sports Psychiatry


Journal of Sports and Exercise Psychiatry

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 **Official organ:** International Society for Sports Psychiatry (ISSP); Swiss Society for Sports Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (SSSPP)

 **Frequency:** quarterly

 **Listed in:** Scopus, SPORTDiscus, APA PsycArticles®, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), PSYINDEX

 **Edited by:** Malte Christian Claussen

At the conference before last, (SEPSIG16) Finance Officer Dr David Prossor provided updates on key publications from the Journal of Sports Psychiatry including a then recently published first international

consensus statement on sports psychiatry by the ISSP (November 2023).

The core aims for SEPSIG are to raise the international profile of Sports Psychiatry working in alliance with this consensus. Three main fields of activity have been outlined; mental health and disorders in competitive and elite sports, mental health and sport-specific mental disorders in recreational sport and finally sports and exercise in prevention of and treatment for mental disorders.

Sports Psychiatry is an international, fully open access, peer-reviewed journal providing a platform for advances in all aspects of sports psychiatry, including but not limited to the diagnosis, management, therapy, and prevention of mental disorders in competitive and popular sports, as well as to physical activity in the prevention and treatment of mental disorders.

The journal is currently on its 4th Volume having been launched in January 2022. The journal publishes articles on all aspects of sports psychiatry and welcomes submissions on such topics at any time however at present they are soliciting papers on the following topic in particular; “Is it really 90% mental? Unpacking the role of mental health in performance”. Further information and deadlines can be found on the journal’s website.

A warm welcome...



Dr Noori Husain, new SEPSIG Social Media Lead

Dr Noori Husain is a core trainee from Thames Valley deanery and is a new member assisting with SEPSIG’s social media. She is involved in equestrian sport and championing diversity through her own social media as well as competing locally at her riding club in dressage.

Dr Bríd Dinneen, new SEPSIG Secretary

Dr Bríd Dinneen general adult higher trainee in East London. She has interests in early intervention for psychosis, tackling inactivity and weight gain in patients diagnosed with psychosis, as well as sports psychiatry more generally.

She wrote and published the SEPSIG16 conference report and is currently involved in an RCPsych project designing and producing exercise advice leaflets for patients, staff and carers. Alongside this she has begun working towards International Society for Sports Psychiatry (ISSP) accreditation.

Dr Dinneen is an outdoor enthusiast with a particular interest in trail running and cold water swimming.



Future events

PROMISE 25



Use exclusive
discount code
RCPSYCH5 to get
5% off ticket
price!!

- About: PROMISE conference is one of the first to focus exclusively on mental health in elite sport, addressing everything from early detection to long-term support.
- Where? South Hall, 18 Holyrood Park Rd, Edinburgh, EH16 5AU in collaboration with Edinburgh University
- When? 20-21 September 2025

The mental health of elite athletes is a crucial conversation now more than ever. With growing awareness, increasing demands, and mounting evidence linking mental well-being to performance, injury prevention, and recovery, the sporting world is taking notice. Now is the time for a focused in-person event dedicated entirely to athlete mental health!

With a programme constructed by key members of the IOC Mental Health Leadership Group - Dr. Brian Hainline, Prof. Margo Mountjoy, Prof. Vincent Gouttebarge, Prof. Alan Currie, Dr. Claudia Reardon, and Prof. Ron Maughan - the PROMISE conference will feature a superstar lineup of international speakers presenting the latest cutting-edge scientific research and practical strategies for diagnosing, managing, and preventing mental health disorders in athletes.

Education

Interested in understanding and learning more about sports psychiatry?

Key papers in the field:

1. Claussen, M.C., Currie, A., Koh Boon Yau, E., Nishida, M., Martínez, V., Burger, J., Creado, S., Schorb, A., Nicola, R.F., Amrit Pattojoshi, Menon, R., Glick, I., Whitehead, J., Edwards, C. and Baron, D. (2024). **First international consensus statement on sports psychiatry**. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, 34(4). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/sms.14627>.
2. Claussen MC, Prossor D, Nahman C, *et al*. **The evolution of sports psychiatry: a clinical intersection of mental health and physical activity** *British Journal of Sports Medicine* Published Online First: 02 January 2025. doi: 10.1136/bjsports-2024-109208
3. Begel, D. (1992). **An overview of sport psychiatry**. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 149(5), 606–614. <https://doi.org/10.1176/ajp.149.5.606>
4. M. C. Claussen, A. Currie, J. W. Burger, D. Prossor, and I. Glick, **“A working research agenda for sports psychiatry: Advancing evidence-based psychiatry in sport, exercise, and physical activity,”** *Sports Psychiatry*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 21–30, Feb. 2025, doi: 10.1024/2674-0052/a000090.

Still interested? Consider working towards an International Society Sports Psychiatry (ISSP) Certificate of Additional Training in Sports Psychiatry. For more information see <https://sportspsychiatry.org/program/#certificate>

Follow us!



We are a very welcoming special interest group so if you are a new or existing member and feel that you have something to contribute to a volume of the newsletter going forwards then please reach out to us using our X page!

Follow our social media for updates around future events and all current affairs related to Sports and Exercise Psychiatry.

@RCPsych_SEPSIG