

International Olympic Committee (IOC) Sports Medicine Diploma Workshop



Text: Professor Martin Schwellnus

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Medical Commission (Medical and Science Group) has been established to oversee the development and implementation of a number of activities to ensure that optimum medical care to athletes participating in the Olympic Games. One of the most recently introduced initiatives of this group was to develop a post-graduate Diploma programme in Sports Medicine.

This Diploma has not been designed as an alternative to existing post-graduate Diploma and other (Masters degree) qualifications in Sport and Exercise Medicine that are offered across the world in a number of academic institutions. Rather, this programme is aimed at providing team physicians from countries attending the Olympic Games with a basic but systematic clinical approach to common medical issues that are encountered at events such as the Olympic Games. Accessibility to this Diploma programme was considered to be a high priority; therefore the delivery of programme was designed as a web-based online course. However, as clinical skills and training are also considered very important, the programme is supplemented by a practical clinical workshop. This workshop is part of the compulsory requirements to successfully complete the Diploma programme.

An international expert group, which was appointed by the IOC, developed the 2-year online curriculum. Professor Martin Schwellnus, who is also the Director of the IOC Research Centre in Africa (one of four of these centres in the world

at that time) was selected to serve on this expert panel. The programme commenced in 2014 and the first students will complete the programme in 2015. As part of the final year (2nd year) requirements is the attendance of a 3-day practical clinical workshop.

Academic institutions have been approached, through members of the expert medical panel and the IOC Research Centres, to host the first of these clinical workshops. On the basis of these recommendations, the IOC selected the following venues for the workshops will be held in the 2nd quarter of 2015: Oslo (Norway), Calgary (Canada), Rome (Italy), and Pretoria (South Africa).

The University of Pretoria (Section Sports Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences) has been identified as the host institution for the IOC Diploma workshop. The convenors of this 3-day workshop are Professors Martin Schwellnus and Christa Janse Van Rensburg from the University of Pretoria, Professor Ron Maughan representing the IOC, and Professor Wayne Derman from Cape Town. Five international students will attend the workshop consisting of hands-on clinical training, clinical case discussions and a written examination. The venue will be the Cricket Centre of Excellence, organised through the High Performance Centre at the University of Pretoria. Students will be accommodated in the High Performance Centre accommodation, and social activities will be organized for the students and the international and national guests during their stay in Pretoria.