

Communications Committee Update

Danielle Kamis, MD, Committee Chair

The Communications Committee seeks to communicate to members, potential members, and the industry of the benefits of involvement in ISSP and to help establish the sub-field of sports psychiatry as a sub-specialty. The main function of the communications committee is to create that web of connection and outreach that helps spread the word about ISSP's activities, future projects, helps manage social media, website, and provides support and the avenue for members wishing to disseminate information.

Right now, we are posting monthly up-to-date articles in our social media on current events in sports psychiatry on multiple media channels including our Instagram account and Twitter managed by Roy Collings. Additionally, Roy has initiated an incredible ISSP podcast channel with great interviews of influential people in the field. Our goal is to provide value to our members and entice new members to join by increasing traffic on our social media channels.

Scientific Committee Update

Alan Currie, MD, Committee Chair

Scientific Symposium

The next scientific symposium will be another online event. It is proposed for late May and perhaps around the time of the APA annual meeting which is May 20th to 24th . More details and a call for abstracts will be circulated early next year.

Sports Psychiatry – Journal of Sports and Exercise Psychiatry (Issue 1.4)

Issue 4 of Sports Psychiatry has just been published at

<https://econtent.hogrefe.com/toc/spp/current>. Sports Psychiatry publishes articles on all aspects of sports psychiatry and welcomes submissions on any related topic. Future issues will cover subjects such as: interpersonal violence in sports; physical activity and sport in child and adolescent psychiatry; sports psychology and sports psychiatry. The journal homepage is <https://www.hogrefe.com/eu/journal/sports-psychiatry#1+1>. Suggestions for topics and special issues are also always welcome. The Editorial Board is looking to expand and if you are interested then let us know (malte.claussen@pukzh.ch).

Concussion Committee Update

David Baron, DO, Committee Chair

The Concussion committee completed a book chapter on sports concussion for a text on brain injury written by 3 members of the committee. The survey study on concussion education continues and is global. The initial study has been published. Members of the committee are looking at reaction time as a potential biomarker for sports concussion.

The committee co-chair presented an invited paper on sports concussion at the Egyptian Psychiatric Assoc meeting in Luxor, while recruiting new members to ISSP.

Mentorship Committee Update

Alex Strauss MD, Committee Chair

The 2022 ISSP Mentorship Program has been a success. Starting in March of 2022 the program shifted from a small group format to a large group monthly meeting. We have over 50 mentees at this time and the list continues to grow. The mentorship program is a window in the life and practice of Sport Psychiatry. This year we were fortunate to have a number of experts present on a variety of topics. A special thanks go out to David Baron, Carla Edwards, Shane Creado, Ranjit Menon, Caz Nahman, Ira Glick and Alan Currie for providing mentorship in 2022. We were able to cover topics including athlete maltreatment, starting a sport psychiatry practice, sleep, personality disorders, starting a research project, eating disorders, sports related concussion, bipolar disorder and youth sports. Survey results showed that all experts and topics were very well received.

In order for the mentorship program to continue to 2023 we'll need new mentor volunteers. The commitment is minimal. We ask that a mentor reserve any hour of their choosing to present on any topic of their choice. The mentorship program will set up the Zoom meeting and invite the mentees. Please email alexstraussmd@gmail.com to volunteer.

Education Committee Update

Claudia Reardon, MD, Committee Chair

The ISSP Education Committee released version 3 of its sports psychiatry curriculum, and accompanying version 3 of its Certificate Program for Additional Training in Sports Psychiatry, at the time of the ISSP Annual Meeting in May 2022. This updated curriculum continues to include some of the classic “landmark” papers in our field, such as founding member Dr. Dan Begel’s 1992 “An overview of sport psychiatry” from the American Journal of Psychiatry. It also adds in important new papers that have been published since 2020, such as Dr. Carla Edwards’ “Depression assessment: challenges and treatment strategies in the athlete”. By popular demand, there is an expanded focus on child and adolescent psychiatry within the curriculum as well.

As its primary function, the ISSP Education Committee continues to spend a lot of time reviewing the completed curriculum materials and scholarly projects of those ISSP members who apply for consideration for a Certificate of Additional Training in Sports Psychiatry. Our committee members work very hard to provide detailed reviews of the applications in order to keep the Certificate Program meaningful. Since May 2022, we have received 9 applications for consideration, which compares to 4 during the same time frame last year. Thus, interest remains high.

Many Committee members have also joined together to contribute to a number of other educational endeavors. In early November 2022, for example, Springer published our text *Mental Health Care for Elite Athletes*. In September 2022, Volume 2 of the journal *Advances in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health* was published, and just like Volume 1 a year earlier, it included a special Sports Psychiatry theme section with manuscripts authored by several of our members.

Psychedelics in Sports

By David Martin, MS4, UWSMPH

As a lifelong Packers fan and native of Wisconsin, I pretty immediately heard the news about Aaron Rogers and ayahuasca. This was hard to miss, with memes popping up all over the place and the Packers offense even performing an ayahuasca themed tea party touchdown celebration. Ayahuasca is a psychedelic tea, historically brewed for thousands of years by indigenous peoples of South America, that works through DMT and MAO-A inhibitors to reportedly produce mystical experiences and personal revelations. While not thoroughly researched, some people suggest that the drug interacts specifically with the visual cortex of the brain, that its use may lead to hippocampal neurogenesis, and that a single dose can cause a sustained treatment effect in treatment-resistant depression. Ayahuasca can also have negative effects, including vomiting and diarrhea, psychological distress, and it can even cause serotonin syndrome. Aaron Rogers consumed the drug in Peru several years ago, but it appears to be more accessible now.

For Rogers, using ayahuasca apparently helped him improve his mental health and find self-love. Kenny Stills, a free agent wide receiver in the NFL, has openly discussed his use of ketamine for similar reasons. Ketamine is an anesthetic drug with hallucinogenic effects that is used in anesthesia, pain management, and treatment resistant depression. It was first synthesized in the early 1960s, tested on human prisoners in 1964, and gained FDA approval for anesthesia in 1970. Research on ketamine and depression continues, but so far, research demonstrates reduction or remission of symptoms lasting between one and seven days on average. Stills reports he has used medical ketamine to good effect, using it to treat his own depression, which he had described as a “permanent cloud.”

A blog post about psychedelics in sports would not be complete without mentioning Dock Ellis, the professional baseball player who infamously pitched a no-hitter while tripping on LSD. Pitching a no-hitter is no easy feat; since baseball started in 1879, there have been 317

total, over 235,500 games. Ellis was reportedly woken up after partying with LSD, cannabis, and alcohol, thought it was the same day, took more LSD, and found out that he was supposed to pitch in four hours. He would go on to win the world series with the Pirates and was the starting pitcher for the National League in the All-Star Game, but this was his only no-hitter.

LSD was first synthesized by Albert Hoffman in 1938, was infamously used on unwitting subjects by the CIA in the 1960s, and currently remains as a schedule 1 drug in the United States, with no approved medical uses. The “extreme sports” world of snowboarding, surfing, paragliding, and rock-climbing is full of anecdotes about the properties of LSD in regards to achieving peak performance. Reports include the slowing of time, lightning fast reflexes, instantaneous non-thinking coordination, increased concentration, perfect balance, and decreased perception of pain. None of this is backed by scientific evidence, but belief in the supernatural powers of LSD remains nonetheless.

So where does this leave the world of sports in regards to athletes using psychedelics? If the reports of Dock Ellis and other internet athletes are to be believed, then these drugs should be considered to be performance enhancing to the umpteenth degree, although this season as a Packers fan is anecdotal evidence to the contrary. Currently, the World Anti-Doping Agency only prohibits MDMA from within the family of psychedelics, a policy shared by the NFL. Several other professional sporting organizations in the United States prohibit the use of a larger number of psychedelics, even though testing for them is notoriously difficult due to high costs and the rapidity with which they leave the urine and the blood. Regardless of prohibition status, these substances are typically not legal in the U.S. The actual number of athletes who use or have used these agents is difficult to determine, due to cultural stigma and possible professional repercussions, but roughly 10% of the adult population of the United States has tried psychedelics. The bulk of research right now focuses on psilocybin and MDMA, and there is preliminary evidence for their effectiveness in treating depression, substance use disorder, and PTSD. It is possible that we will see FDA approval for psychedelics in the not-too-distant future, but in the meantime, publicly acknowledged use by the famous will continue to

generate headlines and sensationalism. It will be interesting to see how the sports world will respond to the ever-increasing literature surrounding this class of drugs, or if it will change at all. But if the number of no-hitters suddenly skyrockets in major league baseball after FDA approval, then it's safe to assume that elite sports will start taking psychedelics much more seriously.

Stay connected! Please follow our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts to keep up to date on current events in the world of sports psychiatry. Our goal is to provide value to our members and entice new members to join by increasing traffic on our social media channels.

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