



I am currently a Core Surgical Trainee at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester, and also work as Chief Medical Officer for Crawley Town Football Club. Last year I completed the Sports Medicine, Exercise & Health MSc at University College London (UCL). I am extremely grateful to have been awarded an MSc bursary by BASEM which has been of great use during the Masters. Having been eager to work in sport for many years, I went into the course motivated and excited about what I would learn and the opportunities that it would bring. The degree proved to be everything that I had hoped for and more. The breadth of the curriculum has not only provided me with skills and knowledge to care for professional sportspeople, but also led me to develop a strong interest in public health, in particular the role that exercise can play in disease prevention and management.

This has had a direct positive impact on my work within Orthopaedics, where patients are often elderly and suffer from multiple comorbidities such as frailty, osteoarthritis, and cardiovascular disease. I now believe that it is the job of all doctors to consider the benefits that exercise might offer their patients.

One aspect of the course at UCL that really sets it apart is the emphasis given to evidence-based practice and research. Students are encouraged to read around topics and consider the strength of evidence that underpins practice.

I am certain that this has best prepared me for work within professional sports. I could not recommend the masters at UCL more highly and would like to outline some of my highlights from the course:

UCL Sports Medicine, Exercise and Health Msc - Richard Connell

Dissertation

Despite advances in the management of anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries, re-injury rates remain high following return to play (RTP) after ACL-reconstruction (ACLR). RTP test batteries do not routinely incorporate sports situational factors, perhaps limiting their ability to detect biomechanical changes pertinent to re-injury risk. Under the supervision of Dr Bruce Paton, my dissertation focused on the effect that fatigue (a risk factor for ACL injury) has on lower limb biomechanics following Anterior Cruciate Ligament reconstruction (ACLR). Specifically, we investigated the effect of fatigue on foot progression angles using a pre- to post-intervention design. The study is part of a larger project being carried out at the Institute of Sport Exercise and Health (ISEH) to develop a functional test battery that incorporates various sporting demands and can guide rehabilitation and return to play post-ACLR. We found that the rotation of ACL-reconstructed and contralateral limbs differed significantly before, but not after the fatigue protocol. Whilst this does not provide evidence that fatigue influences re-injury risk, it demonstrates that it has a significant effect on lower limb biomechanics and hopefully provides insight that can guide future studies and increase the use of functional testing to guide rehabilitation. Dr Paton is an expert regarding both ACL injuries and rehabilitation and, having recently completed a PhD, his knowledge about research and scientific writing was invaluable. I am tremendously grateful for his help.

Charlton Athletic FC

UCL encouraged students to gain experience in a variety of different sports. Having completed the RFU Immediate Care in Sport course (an excellent and informative two days), I was offered the opportunity to gain valuable experience at

Charlton Athletic FC. Under the mentorship of Dr Chris Jones I gained insight into the diverse and challenging nature of day to day work at a football club. It was an excellent opportunity for me to apply the knowledge that I had gained from the MSc in a practical setting. I developed my understanding of medical and musculoskeletal conditions, injury prevention, organisation of vaccinations, cardiac screening, concussion recognition and management and data collection for player monitoring. Although my Dissertation was not conducted in conjunction with the club, it was interesting to see how rehabilitation was performed in a high pressure environment.

Dr Jones is a highly motivated team doctor whose enthusiasm for sport medicine is obvious. He was also passionate about teaching and allowed me to shadow him at first team games. After a few months, I was offered the opportunity to cover games for the under 23/youth teams. This allowed me to develop my leadership and pitch-side care skills.

I feel this experience and the placement at Charlton Athletic gave me additional confidence to apply for my position at Crawley Town FC. I am extremely grateful to the Charlton Athletic medical team for the opportunity and to Dr Jones for the ongoing support and advice that he has offered me since as I set out on a career in Sports and Exercise Medicine.

The course at UCL provided teaching by healthcare professionals who are leaders within their respective fields including Professor Haddad and Mr Hamlyn. I have certainly been inspired by the teachers on the course and their insight will shape my work in the years to come. I was delighted to receive a distinction overall for the MSc and, in addition receive a place on UCL's Faculty of Medical Sciences Postgraduate Dean's List. I would particularly like to thank Dr Kipps, Mr R. Patel, and Dr B Kumar for their teaching and help during the course. I am currently really enjoying my work with Crawley Town FC, and in particular the challenge of taking on more responsibility. It is allowing me to use the skills and knowledge that I have learnt from the masters and develop and refine them further. I would absolutely encourage people considering the masters at UCL to do it and to actively seek opportunities to work in sport.

“

I have certainly been inspired by the teachers on the course and their insight will shape my work in the years to come.”