



Complimentary Approach Grows, But Some Challenges Remain

By Robert A. Weil, DPM

Lower Extremity Review can be both proud and excited about its 10th anniversary and its participation in all aspects of sports medicine and podiatry, rehab, fitness, and wellness. As for what the next decade holds, I predict implementing the input and expertise from all the medical specialties, along with educators, trainers, and therapists of all backgrounds, will continue to grow. The integration of concepts from both western and Eastern medicine for a truly holistic approach and the burgeoning attention to mind-body awareness will continue to flourish. Non-physician disciplines such as physical therapy, acupuncture, massage, meditation, and nutrition will all play larger roles as we seek to improve the health and performance of not just athletes but everyone—young children through older adults. Indeed, there is much to be done: We need all the help we can get!

Some of the biggest challenges we face will continue to be lifestyle-related, such as childhood and adult obesity and diabetes. I'm optimistic that with continued education and awareness we'll be able to make progress by embracing fundamentals, such as promoting walking as a routine school activity in grades K through 12, or paying more attention to prevention and wellness—at home, at school, in the workplace—instead of focusing on reactive sick care.

I look forward to the United States getting smart enough to ban TV advertising of prescription drugs: Only the US and New Zealand allow this...NUTS! We've allowed ourselves to become "a pill for everything" society and we are paying a huge price—we're 5% of world's population yet we consume 80% of the pain pills. It is time to get Big Pharma under control. The growth of non-drug holistic treatments—think physical and occupational therapy and massage—for so many conditions will explode. Bravo!

Greater attention to "The Mental Game" will be exciting to watch. Whether we're looking at the high performance athlete, the challenge of coming back from an injury, adding or changing lifestyle habits or dealing with illness, awareness of how best to use an individual's mental faculties to facilitate healing will grow big time.

How about some sanity in the world of youth sports—now a \$17 billion industry? I fervently hope society, parents, and coaches will continue "to get it," and not continue to allow the epidemic of overuse and repetitive motion injuries among our young athletes. Paying more attention to prevention by encouraging less physical and mental pressure is smart for all concerned. Overkill with over-scheduling, over-parenting and over-coaching are concerns that will garner more and more attention. Yay!

Oh, and what to do about tackle football, especially among school-aged youth? It's one of society's great dilemmas, knowing what we know about concussion and head trauma. Look for us to continue to wrestle with the fact that there is no safe tackle football but many still want to play. We must do better.

And finally, from a sports podiatry point of view, I want to believe awareness of the importance of the role of the foot in health, fitness, wellness, and sports will keep moving forward, one foot in front of the other, as we as clinicians strive to create a healthier world. And I hope *Lower Extremity Review* and *LER Pediatrics* will continue to keep its multidisciplinary community informed all along the way.

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