1.2 The team physician in football 1.2.1 The roles of the team physician in football In football teams, either national teams or club teams, there is a uniform organisational structure within which the coaching staff, administrative staff, medical team and players function. Illness management Footballers and other athletes suffer illnesses that occur commonly in the general population such as asthma, upper respiratory tract infections, skin rashes and diarrhoea. The roles of a TP mainly refer to eight broad activity fi elds: – Injury management – Illness management – Prevention of injury and illness – Emergency care – Acclimatisation issues: jet lag, heat and humidity, altitude – Anti–doping issues including prevention of doping infringements – Optimising performance: nutrition, hydration, screening for overtraining of players – Counselling players and staff Injury management One of the major roles of a TP is to determine that a player is injured, accurately diagnose the complaint and institute treatment. Medical teams in different leagues form a continuum, with the simplest form consisting of a resident physiotherapist working with a consulting doctor acting as a TP. In more advanced forms, a medical team consists of a resident TP with physiotherapists, trainers, masseurs, a nutritionist and a podiatrist. In the absence of an elaborate medical team, the TP would have to perform numerous tasks, e.g. advise players on nutrition including meal selection and assist in some cases with physiotherapy and ankle strapping, especially when on tour. Injuries and illnesses that occur beyond the expertise of the doctor should be referred to a suitable specialist and a referral network should be established both at home and when the team is travelling. He is also responsible for declaring that the injured player has recovered and is suffi ciently well to resume full training after undergoing rehabilitation. The TP advises the coach about the health status of the players and makes the fi nal decision with respect to the players' eligibility for competitive football. Diagnosis may rely on the use of clinical acumen in simple injuries but sometimes complex imagining is required for more complicated ones.

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