

Speech by Professor Charles S. B. Galasko at the Launch of the Speciality of Sport and Exercise Medicine and the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine at the Royal College of Physicians of London on 11 September 2006.

Your Royal Highness, (The Princess Royal) Ladies and Gentlemen

First I want to thank you Ma'am for finding time in your very busy schedule to Launch the new Speciality of Sport and Exercise Medicine and the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine this afternoon. We are also honoured that you have agreed to become the Patron of the new Faculty. It is the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine that has the responsibility for setting the standards in the new Speciality, establishing the training programmes etc.

A great stimulus to the development of Sport and Exercise Medicine in the United Kingdom was the 1986 Commonwealth Games, which I was fortunate to attend as a venue doctor and following which the three Scottish Royal Colleges established a Board of Sports Medicine. The Board established the regulations and syllabus for Sport and Exercise Medicine as well as the Diploma Examination setting standards for safe practice for doctors at the touch line, doctors helping to prepare teams or individuals for competition, doctors treating sport injuries as well as doctors promoting active rehabilitation and exercise. The Diploma was widely accepted as a safe standard of practice by doctors providing medical services to football, rugby and other sports.

It took another 10 years for the Intercollegiate Academic Board of Sport and Exercise Medicine to be established following which the Scottish Royal Colleges generously offered to convert the Scottish Diploma into a UK and Ireland Diploma run by the new Board as did the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries with their examination. This new Board would not have been established without the intervention of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh in 1996. The report of the working party established the previous year by the Institute of Sports Medicine had not won the support of the Academy of the Medical Royal Colleges. . It was at a dinner hosted by Prince Philip, during an Academic Conference of the Institute of Sports Medicine that he urged Dame Fiona Caldicott the then Chair of the Academy to review the position, following which Dr Michael Brindle the then President of the Royal College of Radiologists chaired a working party whose recommendations were partly accepted by the Academy creating the Intercollegiate Academic Board. The main remit of the Board was the Diploma Examination and I want to thank Professor Donald Macleod my predecessor as Chairman of the Board for everything that he did in establishing the reputation of the Board and the Diploma Examination throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. After he demitted office the Board decided to create a Medal for the top candidate in the examinations each year to be named the Macleod Medal and I want to add my congratulations to the winners in 2003, 2004 and 2005 namely Dr William Graham 2003, Dr Gerard Flaherty 2004 and Dr Matthew Dodd 2005 who sends his apologies as he is on his honeymoon. Professor

Macleod also sends his apologies. Unfortunately, he is giving the Eulogy at the funeral of his best friend. I also want to thank Aircast for funding the Medal.

The Board's main responsibility continued to be the Diploma Examination and I want to thank Dr Carrie MacEwen and all the examiners for all the hard work they have done in maintaining the high standards of what is a complex examination to run and organise. I think that they have done and are doing a marvellous job.

In 2003 the Board was involved in the working party established with the support of Mr Richard Caborn, Minister of Sport to look at the future of Sport and Exercise Medicine. Without his support I doubt whether the Speciality would have been created. I am very grateful to all members of the Working Party for the enormous amount of work they put in and in particular Professor Mark Batt, the Vice-President of the Faculty. At about the same time the Board also decided to establish a system of appraisal for those doctors working in Sport and Exercise Medicine outside the NHS and I want to thank Professor Wallace and his team for establishing a very successful appraisal system for doctors in the speciality.

The training programme which we have established will take 8 years from the time of graduation from Medical School. This means that no doctor who starts training now can be on the Specialist Register prior to the 2012 Olympic Games. Currently, there are only 3 doctors in Sport and Exercise Medicine on the Specialist Register. Our main anxiety is that there will not be sufficient doctors on the Specialist Register to service the 2012 Olympic Games. There are 2 ways in which we can provide a sufficient number of doctors. The training programme is divided into 2 parts, 4 years of basic training which includes the Foundation years and 4 years of Higher Specialist Training. The first 4 years are generic and there are a number of doctors in training who will have completed the generic 4 years and who will be eligible to enter the Higher Specialist Training Programme in August 2007. They will have completed their training in time for the 2012 Olympic Games. We are however limited by the number of funded registrar posts given to the speciality. Currently we only have 9 such posts which means that only 3 people can start in 2007, 2 in 2008, 2 in 2009 etc so that a maximum of 3 doctors will have completed their training in time for the 2012 Olympic Games. The only way we can increase this number is if we are given funding for more registrar posts. The training opportunities are there.

The second way in which individuals can get onto the Specialist Register is to apply to the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board, their application being based on their previous training and experience in Sport and Exercise Medicine. There are a number of doctors who are already involved in the speciality and who can apply but it is likely that many will be told that they require some further training in order to obtain all the competencies required to be on the Specialist Register. We have been told by the Department of Health that there is no money available for the top up training of such individuals and we are dependent on commercial sponsorship, and would be grateful for any such support.

We are in advanced discussion with the Premier League to help sponsor an 8 year training programme for 1 trainee in Academic SEM. Since the Faculty was created we have already had over 200 applications for Membership and Fellowship of the Faculty indicating the number of doctors who are involved in the speciality and I want to thank Dr Ian McCurdie and his team for assessing the applications.

Doctors trained in Sport and Exercise Medicine will have many responsibilities. In addition to teaching and research their clinical activities will include looking after elite athletes for example as Club doctors, Governing body doctors, working in Sport Institutes, advising about Dope Control etc; venue doctors; providing high quality facilities for injured athletes of all calibres across the United Kingdom through the NHS; the use of sport and exercise in the treatment of Cardiac disease, respiratory disease, prevention of Type 2 Diabetes; sport for the disabled; and in Public Health in terms of prevention of Obesity, improvement in the health of the Nation etc. The Government has become very concerned about the health of the Nation and the role of exercise. Increasing participation in sport will lead to an increase in injury and there must be enough well trained doctors not only to deal with this but also to advise on safe exercise. The use of exercise in the treatment and prevention of disease requires expertise. We can train the individuals but they will only be able to contribute if posts are found for them in PCT's across the Nation. Unless these posts are created there will not be the medical support for the Government's initiatives in Sport and Exercise.

Since the Specialist Medical Order was changed the Faculty has achieved an enormous amount. This would not have been possible without the hard work of all Members of the Council and I want to thank them, their sponsoring Colleges and Faculties and our Secretary Mrs Yvonne Gilbert for all the work that they have done; nor would it have been possible without the Educational Grant from the Newman Foundation which has enabled us to carry out much of this work.

I also want to thank the staff at the RCP for all their help with this afternoon's launch.

Finally I want to thank you all for coming to the Launch today. Without your participation it would not have been possible.

This ends the formal part of the Launch. It will be followed by a reception and I would be grateful if you would all make your way to the reception area where you will be joined by the Princess Royal in a few minutes.

Thank you for your attention.