



Faculty of Sport
and Exercise
Medicine UK

Excellence in
Musculoskeletal
Medicine, Exercise
Medicine and
Team Care

Professional Code

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HEALTH THROUGH SPORT AND

EXERCISE

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Professional Code

Foreword

This Second Edition of the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine Professional Code is an important document for any doctor working in Sport and Exercise Medicine. The Professional Code maps the duties and responsibilities of a doctor working in sport to the GMC Document *Good Medical Practice* and provides clear advice and guidance.

The doctors on the FSEM Council endorsed this document unanimously at their meeting on 6th October 2016. I am extremely grateful to Dr Roderick Jaques the Immediate Past President of the Faculty for his work updating this important document.

This document was published on 24th October 2016 and will be updated as circumstances dictate. If you are reading a printed copy please check our website to ensure that you are using the most up to date version. www.fsem.ac.uk

Dr Paul D Jackson

President FSEM 2015-2018



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Introduction

This Professional Code is for Members and Fellows of the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine United Kingdom (FSEM UK).

The fundamental professional obligations of a Member or Fellow of the FSEM UK are no different to those *duties of a doctor* registered with the General Medical Council UK. This Professional Code should be read in conjunction with the latest General Medical Council's (GMC) guidelines and is similarly formatted.

This Professional Code serves to fill in for some areas of medical practice inside Sport and Exercise Medicine, which may require further clarification for Members and Fellows. Where there is any doubt Members or Fellows are urged to seek guidance from their medical Indemnity providers as to their professional conduct.

The GMC's *Good Medical Practice* summarises the duties of a Doctor registered with the GMC in four key domains:

1. Knowledge, skills and performance.
2. Safety and quality.
3. Communication, partnership and teamwork.
4. Maintaining trust.

Similar to the GMC Good Medical Practice the FSEM (UK) Professional code has used the terms

- **'you must'** as an overriding duty or principle
- **'you should'** is an explanation of how you will meet that principle or when there are factors outside your control on how you should proceed.

Dr R Jaques

Immediate past President FSEM (UK) 2016

1. Knowledge, skills and performance

You must:

- 1.1. Ensure you have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide the highest standards of medical care for your patient.
- 1.2. Maintain your continued professional development and each annual professional appraisal must assess the full scope of your practice as a doctor including administrative, research and clinical work.
- 1.3. Provide medical care without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, sex, cultural, ethnic, disability, lifestyle or religion.
- 1.4. Maintain your professional autonomy regardless of third party pressures.
- 1.5. Understand the skills both mental and physical in the training and competition requirements of your patient to participate in sport or an exercise regime.
- 1.6. Clarify the role, responsibilities, contract and indemnity insurance in advance of taking up a new post to ensure you are properly equipped for the duties you are undertaking and the sports specific needs.
- 1.7. Ensure that you have adequate indemnity protection against damages, claimant's costs and defence costs relating to a claim brought by a patient's employer, club, agent, sponsor or event organiser in relation to alleged negligent treatment of a patient. Members and Fellows should discuss indemnity options with their employer and medical defence organisation. Indemnity insurance may only cover the Doctor for claims made by the patient, and not by their club, agent, sponsor or other.
- 1.8. Ensure you have adequate personal injury insurance.
- 1.9. Refer to another member of the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) if you have insufficient knowledge or experience in the area of the patient's problem, or if you feel the patient would benefit from other professional involvement.
- 1.10. Refer for a second opinion and facilitate this for your patient, when appropriate.

You should:

- 1.11. Be aware that you are not obliged to provide treatment if you believe this will not be in your patient's best interest

- 1.12. When using material such as quotes, photographs, or endorsements from athletes, teams or patients to promote or publicise your professional practice or clinic you must obtain their full consent in writing. The consent should be clear about how the material will be used.
- 1.13. Respect the views of other Members and Fellows in public and avoid unbalanced criticism of colleagues by impugning their professional or personal reputations.
- 1.14. Only engage with the media in areas of SEM in which you have knowledge and expertise.

2. Safety and quality

You must:

- 2.1. When a patient returns to physical activity and where there is a chance of re injury, you must inform the patient of the known short term and long term consequences to their health. Where you believe there is a high risk of significant further injury you must state this in terms that the patient fully understands the consequences of their actions. In certain circumstances you may wish to obtain a signed disclaimer/acknowledgement from the patient if you believe the patient to be competing against medical advice.
- 2.2. Where you believe that the risk to return to sport is significantly detrimental to the health of your patient you are under no obligation to continue to provide treatment. You must feel able to refuse treatment to the patient if you feel the risks of return to sport are unacceptably high.
- 2.3. Advocate for the patient if you believe they are being pressured to make a decision to return to physical activity if it is thought that they have a high risk of further injury.
- 2.4. Have the authority and support of the sport rules, to remove a patient from the field of play and further potential injury if you believe they do not have the full mental capacity to act in their own best interests i.e. after a concussion
- 2.5. Ensure that the clinic environment that you are working in is fit for purpose to apply your skills and respects the privacy of the patient and where applicable meet the standards of any external organisation (e.g. Care Quality Commission).
- 2.6. Refuse to attend a sporting fixture or event where in your opinion the medical and emergency facilities do not meet the requisite minimum standards for that sport. If there are no published minimum standards and you believe participants would come to significant harm because of inadequate medical facilities, seek guidance from your medical indemnity provider.

- 2.7. Raise concerns on patient safety, training regimes, equipment and environments which you feel may have a significant adverse effect on the short or long term health of the patient. Refer to GMC Raising and acting on concerns about patient safety.
- 2.8. When travelling abroad with athletes and teams observe international regulations regarding temporary medical practice, medication importation and prescription practice.
- 2.9. When travelling abroad ensure that you have indemnity cover and seek clarity whether this relates to the athletes only or allows you to provide medical services to the support and administrative staff.
- 2.10. When travelling with minors have adequate training in issues related to child protection, and be mindful of the increased responsibilities of adults travelling with young people to ensure their safety.

You should:

- 2.11. When appropriate, endorse physical activity as an adjunct to the medical management of physical and mental illness amongst your professional colleagues, community and MDT.
- 2.12. Discuss and educate patients about prevention strategies, protective equipment and clothing.
- 2.13. Continue to act in the patients best interests when a hospital, medical group or healthcare corporation may pay a club/organisation in exchange for the 'privilege' of providing medical support to that club/organisation. If appropriate you should make it clear to the patient that their best medical care should be obtained elsewhere.
- 2.14. When requested, provide appropriate supervision to doctors undertaking higher specialist training in sport and exercise medicine. Ensure you meet all the requirements of a training facility and governance for doctors undertaking higher specialist training in sport and exercise medicine.
- 2.15. Rehearse medical services including crowd care, mass participation event care and pre-hospital emergency care where appropriate. You should understand and have practiced your role in any major incident plan.

3. Communication, partnership and teamwork

You must:

- 3.1. Where ever possible explain to the patient their problem in a language and method that they will understand. This should include their full treatment options, prognosis, recovery time and future potential complications. This can be challenging, and where you are speculating on issues, you should make this clear to the patient.
- 3.2. When asked to do so and with the patient's permission explain the medical problem to coaches, management, parents and guardians. In many instances patients medical management can be enhanced by appropriate information exchange with these groups and this should be explained to the patient.
- 3.3. Not allow access to patient's records by third parties without the consent of the patient.
- 3.4. When providing a second opinion, do so in an honest manner, without unprofessional criticism of other colleagues.
- 3.5. Remember that the patient's General Practitioner is key to documenting and understanding the full spectrum of your patient's healthcare. To ensure that the General Practitioner is kept updated you should facilitate that all suitable medical information is exchanged on your patient at suitable intervals to maintain their medical continuity of healthcare. In private practice you should inform the patient's general Practitioner after each clinic visit.
- 3.6. When asked to communicate with the media, provide information that is factually correct, balanced and acknowledges uncertainty when appropriate. Consent must be obtained beforehand if named patient data is to be used and if necessary seek guidance from your professional indemnity organisation on the form of words you should use in any media releases.
- 3.7. Not be party to any medical media information release which is untruthful with the intention of gaining a sporting competitive advantage.
- 3.8. If working in a high profile sport undergo media training appropriate to your role within the sport.
- 3.9. When working in a team physician capacity overseas, a member or fellow may find himself/herself in the role of a primary care physician. You will be expected to have the necessary knowledge and skills of a primary care physician. If you have doubt on the correct course of medical management, explain this to the patient and where possible seek appropriate medical advice.

You should:

- 3.10. Work collaboratively with all members of the MDT.
- 3.11. Provide care for other colleagues' patients when asked to do so if they are absent or unavailable.
- 3.12. Make arrangements for the patient's General Practitioner to be informed of treatment, particularly on cessation of an episode of care.
- 3.13. When appropriate educate coaches, management and sporting bodies on the grounds of maintaining confidentiality between the patient and doctor.

4. Maintaining trust

You must:

- 4.1. Make the patient your primary concern. Contracts with their employers (ie professional sport, National Governing Body) does not override your primary duty to the health and wellbeing of the patient.
- 4.2. Not bring the Faculty of Sport and Exercise medicine (UK) into disrepute.
- 4.3. Respect and co-operate with the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine (UK) Articles and disciplinary proceedings.
- 4.4. Be aware of legal and professional requirements in obtaining consent from minors and those with mental impairment. Refer to the GMC 0-18 year: guidance for all doctors and Protecting children and young people
- 4.5. Be aware of the effects of sport on children in general and those with concurrent health issues.
- 4.6. Be aware of your statutory responsibilities to children and vulnerable adults around safeguarding.
- 4.7. Make it clear to the patient what role you are playing in the consultation - for instance in an assessment of fitness to compete or an inter professional team transfer medical the patient must be fully informed that this is an assessment-only role. In this instance the Member or Fellow must act in good faith with the organisation that he/she represents and should explain to the patient that he/she may not be acting in the patient's best interest.

- 4.8. Maintain the patient's confidentiality when requested to do so. This may bring the Member or Fellow in breach of his/her employment contractual obligations and employer expectations. In the first instance discuss with the patient your dilemma, if there is strong public interest or legal grounds for breaching that confidentiality explain to the patient your reasoning for breaching his/her confidentiality. If in doubt seek guidance from your medical indemnity provider.
- 4.9. Be aware of the national and international current regulations on anti-doping in sport. You should not assist, support or ignore practices, policies or procedures that enhance athletic performance and contravene the national or international doping regulations.
- 4.10. Report practices, policies or procedures that contravene national and international anti-doping regulations. There are facilities to do this in an anonymised manner.
- 4.11. Discuss with your indemnity provider your management of a patient who wishes to cease using a prohibited substance for the purpose of performance enhancement and is seeking your assistance in using an alternative, non-prohibited substance(s).
- 4.12. Make it clear to your patient if you are receiving sponsorship, products or support which may in any way affect the optimal health options for your patient.
- 4.13. Make it clear to your patient if you receive financial gain or benefit in kind from the use of products, drugs or equipment in the course of his/her treatment.
- 4.14. Be extremely cautious about giving personal endorsement to methods, products or equipment which do not have a robust peer reviewed evidence base.
- 4.15. Inform the patient if a novel treatment is being proposed, particularly any known or potential short, middle or long term side effects. Where there is a lack of evidence in support of a novel treatment this should be communicated to the patient.

You should:

- 4.16. Discuss with patients the challenges obtaining consent in high pressure situations and try where possible to prepare for this in advance with the team and support staff. Where you feel the patient cannot give suitably informed consent remove him/her from the environment in order to do so.
- 4.17. Wherever possible educate patients, coaches and management agencies about the negative health effects of performance enhancing methods and drugs.
- 4.18. Declare any relationship with third parties which may influence the content of your presentation at conferences or scientific meetings.





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