I know that I’ve opined about concussions in the past, but it is one of my favorite topics and as Americans continue to be bombarded by media reports about concussions, it is an issue that is easy to speak about. I was fortunate enough to have taken part in the Concussion in Sport Group 2016 Berlin meeting, where the top clinicians and researchers on concussion met to create concussion management policy. From this meeting evolved the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport—The 5th International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Berlin, October 2016, along with a series of excellent systematic reviews on a variety of theme topics that were discussed at the meeting—a must read for any clinician who deals with sport-related concussions!

As a strong advocate for the profession of athletic training, I’ve always had a keen interest in making athletic trainers aware of the need to stay contemporary and to practice the current standard of care. As such, I created an evidence-based practice lecture/workshop that was approved by the Board of Certification and over the past year I’ve had an opportunity to share with athletic trainers across the United States current standard of care guidelines derived from the Berlin consensus statement. This has been a wonderful experience meeting colleagues from a variety of athletic training environments, all with the desire to stay up-to-date in the management of sport-related concussions.

With concussion research at unprecedented highs, the bar is always rising, and the need for athletic trainers and sports health care professionals to stay abreast of the changes ever so important. If you’re practicing based on standards from 2016, you’re working in the past! Besides the obvious medical-legal ramifications of not staying current in practice, it has become apparent that the population that athletic trainers treat is extremely well-educated and well-versed in their understanding of concussions, so that as clinicians we are forced to stay sharp with regard to our clinical skills surrounding concussion management. Throughout my travels, I’ve been impressed by the enthusiasm and level of sophistication from which athletic trainers are practicing concussion management and their desire to strengthen their own clinical skill set, young and old alike.

Inevitably audience questions arise about quick, unequivocal diagnostic measures that make the sport-related concussion diagnosis 100% accurate. The world’s smartest concussion researchers and clinicians are on the hunt to find these measures and I sense that it is only...
a matter of a few years and something will emerge. In fact, recent reports show promise from several studies involving biomarkers, vision tests, balance measure, and the like, but in the words of ESPN College Gameday football analyst Lee Corso: "not so fast!" My response to these audience queries is that athletic trainers are “front-line” health care professionals who are in an excellent position to use their injury diagnostic skills to carefully and capably handle sport-related concussions. And so before those “quick and easy” diagnostic tools are ready it will be imperative that athletic trainers continue to refine and hone their sport-related concussion clinical skills and maintain the current standard of care needed to efficiently and safely manage these sport injuries. “Not so fast” should be your motto to live by!

REFERENCE

The author has no financial or proprietary interest in the materials presented herein.
doi:10.3928/19425864-20180423-01