

## **NAVIGATING THE PITFALLS OF THE HEALTH INDUSTRY**

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An athlete's health is the key foundation to their performance, optimizing it provides a more solid footing to build upon with training and skills acquisition. The slightest fluctuations in health markers have a direct impact on performance, therefore, many athletes seek out ways to enhance or maintain their high level of health. This has led to a flourishing market within the health industry specifically targeted to sport, and like all free markets there are pitfalls, scams and shams to avoid.

How does an athlete navigate this somewhat daunting market? There is no perfect way but having information and a critical approach can help.

### **ENSURE THE USE OF REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND / OR QUALIFIED PRACTITIONERS**

- Some health professionals are regulated under the health professions act; they would have a provincial governing body (ie College of Physiotherapists).
- Some health professions are not provincially regulated but may have professional associations that require practitioners to be members of practice.
- Most health fields have minimum certification or registration requirements, look into these requirements before following through with an inquiry.



### **UNDERSTAND BRANDED / PATENTED / CERTIFICATION TECHNIQUES OR MODALITIES**

- They are patented to make money NOT because they are more effective than the science and principles behind it.
- The technique does not make the practitioner.
- There are no regulations on patenting / certifying techniques.
- A good health practitioner will not use trendy techniques as a marketing tool.

### **ACCEPT THAT HEALTHCARE IS TRENDY**

- The newest thing is not always the best thing. Do some research and collect different opinions before trusting the first thing you read.
- Truly researched health modalities take years to be 'pushed' into the market.
- There will always be a new technique on the horizon.
- Trendiness lends to techniques/modalities being used for reasons outside of their researched indications (i.e. corrective techniques for pain management).

## **AVOID HEALTH PRACTITIONERS THAT HAVE A 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' APPROACH OR SELL THE PANACEA**

- Not every injury can be addressed by one modality / technique or treatment approach, be aware of this.
- Anecdotal evidence is weak at best.
- Success / expertise of a health practitioner is measured by their peers not their patients / clients.

The health industry can be a minefield, this is true in many ways but there are just as many great practitioners as there are suspect ones. Here is a 'quick guide' to seeking out a good practitioner for athletes and fostering a supportive professional relationship:



### **QUICK GUIDE**

1. Use the network of professionals (IST, coaches, teammates etc.) as a starting reference pool.
2. Research the different health disciplines to determine the best practitioner(s) for your needs.
3. Research potential treatment protocols, modalities or approaches for levels of efficacy (ie. ART, K-tape, IMS, etc) and indications for treatment.
4. Contact potential health practitioner(s) and inquire about their treatment approach and experience.
5. Be wary of stupendous claims of success, anecdotal evidence, 'name dropping' or 'athlete deals'.
6. Do not be afraid to communicate or inquire about specific treatment approaches or modalities.
7. Communicate with coach, medical / IST lead on your decision of practitioner(s) to encourage the high performance mandate of 'athlete focused, coach driven'.
8. Encourage continued communication between practitioner, coaches and IST to build a working environment that grows with your athletic career.