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**THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL SERVICE'S MULTI-DISCIPLINARY  
SERVICE PHILOSOPHY IN SUPPORT OF THE SANDF FORCE PREPARATION  
AND SPORT FUNCTION**

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**INTRODUCTION**

1. Training and sport as a combination is today deemed to be one of the most dynamic scientific domains for the optimal development of a Defence Force, and in particular the South African National Defence Force's human resources. It is an international acknowledged fact that all Defence Forces, as part of their strategic considerations, place emphasis on certain strategies with regard to the development and application of the macro training function, also taking into consideration their sport function. Today the SANDF is well-positioned with regard to its training strategy and excellent progress is made towards establishing sport as an integral part of force preparation and human resource development.
2. With the admission of the Republic of South Africa to the international sports arena, the achievements accomplished today were phenomenal. Not only did the Springboks of François Pinard win the World Cup Rugby with the inspiration of our President, President Nelson Mandela, but the Bafana Bafana won the Africa Cup for Soccer, and Hansie Cronje's South African Cricket Team put up a capital performance in the World Cup Cricket and many more.
3. The above results were achieved after the sporting bodies of the Republic of South Africa took to heart the direction indicated by the Department of Sport and Recreation. In the white paper issued by the Department of Sport and Recreation, one of the fundamental pillars of development is situated in the utilization of a Scientific Support Service. This guideline is pertinent for the SANDF and the South African Medical Service in particular, in order to establish structures and processes whereby training and sport participation, linked to good results can be optimized.

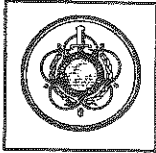
**PURPOSE OF THIS PRESENTATION**

4. The purpose of this presentation is to brief and sensitize participants of the CISM Scientific symposium, regarding the SA Medical Service's philosophy with regard to the multi-disciplinary service - rendering to the training - and sport function in the SANDF.

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL SERVICE'S MULTI-PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PHILOSOPHY WITH  
REGARD TO THE SPORT AND TRAINING FUNCTION**

**PURPOSE**

5. The purpose of the multi-disciplinary support function with regard to the SANDF is to make a contribution towards optimizing the South African National Defence Force's force preparation and sport function.



## GENERIC LEVELS OF ACTION

6. The multi-disciplinary team will execute this comprehensive function at three generic levels via:
  - a. Preparatory and/or preventative level.
  - b. Executive and/or curative level
  - c. Rehabilitative level.
7. If all the generic levels are optimally utilized, a qualitative winning advantage will be achieved. Not only will SANDF sportsmen and sportswomen compete at equivalent international levels, but the force preparation component of the SANDF will be managed cost-effectively with a minimum loss of man hours, resulting from injuries during training and sport participation.

## SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL SERVICE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM

8. The SA Medical Service multi-disciplinary support team is at present composed of 14 professional groupings. Based on existing research and development it is possible that the team may be enlarged even further, subject to specific needs. The multi-disciplinary team is composed and changed in format, based on well considered evaluation, but the medical officers remains the main co-ordinator of the total effort, throughout the process.

### a. Medical officers

The medical officer plays a cardinal role in the three generic processes. Attempts are made to identify medical officers who are primarily interested in the sport function, who are preferably personally participants or administrators and who qualify themselves further in sport medicine.

### b. Pharmacist officers

These experts officers have a critical function in all generic processes with regard to identification, development and administration of medicine. Today it is evident that one of the main threats in sport, nationally and internationally is the use of illegal medication, especially steroids stimulants.

### c. Psychology officers

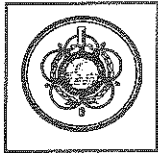
Psychological preparation of sports participants have developed into a dynamic component of psychological function. In this field the winning advantage is incalculated within the mind. In the SA Medical Service, Sport Psychology has been refined and professional officers specializing in the following fields are utilized for this task:

- i. Motivation.
- ii. Incalculating of a controlled aggressive will to win.
- iii. Psychological preparation for top level competition and high intensity training.
- iv. Improved concentration.

### d. Oral Health Officers

Their specific expertise is utilized at preventative and rehabilitative generic levels, to prepare soldiers physically and psychologically for action.

The following areas are relevant:



- i. Protection of teeth in contact sport.
- ii. Preventive oral health.
- iii. Rehabilitation when applicable.

**e. Biokinetics Officers**

The biokinetics and human kinematic sciences today are the most dynamic sciences in the Republic of SA with regard to the preventative, curative and rehabilitative function in training and sport. This discipline plays an important role on respect of:

- i. Development of professionally/scientifically based training programmes.
- ii. Rehabilitation of athletes after injury.
- iii. Analysis of physically weak and strong points in an athlete.
- iv. Identification of potential top performances.

**f. Physiotherapy Officers**

The task of the physiotherapist lies mainly in the curative and rehabilitative domains. In the modern era it is unheard of to negate the comprehensive input of this discipline during the practising of sport and training and their input in the event of acute injuries and during rehabilitation is indispensable.

**g. Dietetics Officers**

Sufficient and correct nutriment intake is one of the basic elements required for top performance and qualitative force preparation. Almost all types of sport and physical training components differ in respect of energy output level and time-span during which energy should be made available. Accordingly, the following of a scientifically based diet during the preparatory phase, during competition/training and when applicable during rehabilitation, is due of utmost importance. Dieticians can play a very important role in this area, in order to optimize performance.

**h. Nursing Officers**

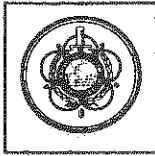
Within the SA Medical Service this discipline has a valuable function in the care of sport - and training injured. Not only do they perform the nodal function hospitalization of injured persons, but they also make an excellent contribution during the rehabilitation phase. As a discipline, they are indeed an indispensable component of the multi-disciplinary team.

**i. Social workers Officers**

The athlete/student is in continuous interaction with people around him/her and influenced especially by his/her family relationships. Most importantly, the athlete/student remains a human being, subject to external influences, which have a direct influence on their performance. The social work officer, in consultation with psychologists and chaplains, plays a key role in the optimizing of an individuals' performance and throughout all three generic processes.

**j. Chaplains**

Statistics confirm that the results of the Republic of South Africa are a deeply devote nation. Chaplains of all religious denominations have a key role to play in the spiritual preparation of athletes/students and are equally indispensable in the curative and rehabilitative phases.



**k. Veterinary Officers**

The expertise of this discipline is an absolute necessity where animals are involved in training and sport. Within the context of the SANDF context, mainly horses and dogs are involved. The human/animal interaction is a science in its own right and a key role is played by this discipline to co-ordinate the activities in the multi-disciplinary team context.

**l. Occupational Therapy Officers**

Members of this discipline are primarily involved in the rehabilitation phase of injured members of the SANDF. The future quality of life of members is directly related to the degree of rehabilitation achieved for them by Occupational Therapists.

**m. Orthotists and Prosthetists**

Members of this profession perform a key-function that is not generally known, during all three generic processes. Not only can they for instance recommend what type of training shoes should be used, but they are also of critical importance in certain preventive and rehabilitative functions.

**n. Operational Emergency Care Orderlies**

In the SA Medical Service, members of this discipline represent the first line of medical support as far as all training and sport activities are concerned. It is an internationally acknowledged fact that the quality of the initial management of injuries resulting from training or sport activities, is directly related to the end-result of treatment. The SA Medical Service attaches great value to the selection and training as well as re-training of members of this discipline in order to ensure the optimal support of our sportsmen and -women on the sports field.

**o. Research and Development**

Within the SANDF ongoing research and development with reference to the multi-disciplinary support team is the order of the day. With the new international access and co-operation, we believe that the multi-professional team approach will accomplish a winning advantage for us traditionally and internationally, in both the military training and sports domains. Without doubt, an investment in further Research and Development will be an investment for the future.

**CONCLUSION**

10. The human body is a unique complex creation in which the physical and psychological components function optimally. The mind which represents the psychological or spiritual component, drives a healthy, developed soma, representing the body, from a well-balanced basis. The soma and mind can never function independently from each other. The question comes to mind, by what other means can a multi-professional team optimize these life components better. Properties such as integrity, ability and perseverance are, however, required to reach the top.

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