



**Australian Government**  
**National Health and Medical Research Council**



22 November 2023

Ms Apolline Kohen  
Committee Secretary

[community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Ms Kohen,

### **Inquiry into concussions and repeated head trauma in sports**

I refer to your letter dated 9 November 2023 in which you seek clarification about an NHMRC public consultation process conducted between March and May 2003. The consultation process informed NHMRC's decision to rescind 20 of its publications based on their age.

I am advised that of the 44 public consultation comments received by NHMRC in this period, 3 related to the *Head and neck injuries in football: Guidelines for prevention and management (includes concussion notes for referees, umpires and coaches) 1994*.

The 3 submissions were received from the:

- Australian Association of Neurologists
- Australian College of Sports Physicians
- Australian Medical Association (Victoria) Ltd. and the Medical Society of Victoria Inc.

Copies of the submissions are attached.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Steve Wesselingh**  
Chief Executive Officer



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Attach:

Australian Association of Neurologists submission

Australian College of Sports Physicians submission

Australian Medical Association (Victoria) Ltd. and the Medical Society of Victoria Inc. submission.

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16<sup>th</sup> July 2003

Mr Ian Denley  
Health Advisory Section (MDP 100)  
NHMRC  
GPO Box 9848  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

*Football Injuries of the Head & Neck*  
***7. Head and Neck Injuries in Football 1994***  
**Submission 2.**  
Australian Association of Neurologists

Dear Mr Denley

**RE: NHMRC Publications**

Thank you for your letter concerning NHMRC publications dealing with *Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Older Person and Sports Related Injuries*. I have forwarded these to experts in the field within the Australian Association of Neurologists. I attach the comments of Dr Helen Dewey regarding the publication "Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Older Person".

Dr Paul McCrory reviewed the publication, *Boxing Injuries 1993, Head and Neck Injuries in Football: guidelines 1994 and Football Injuries of the head and Neck 1994*. He recommended that all these reports require major revision or rewriting primarily due to the new and extensive range of scientific evidence that has been published in a medical literature on each of these topics.

Having considered this report the AAN recommends that the NHMRC form a new expert panel in each area to revise these publications. The AAN would recommend Dr McCrory as its representative on such panels. He was involved in the development of the prior reports.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Richard Macdonell  
HONORARY SECRETARY

Cc MS Mandy Jones, Executive Officer, AAN



AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SPORTS PHYSICIANS

ABN 40 003 200 584

12 June 2003

Mr. Ian Denley  
Health Advisory Section (MDP 100)  
NH&MRC  
GPO Box 9848  
Canberra ACT 2601

**7. Football Injuries of the head and Neck: 1994  
Submission 1.**  
Australian College of Sports Physicians

Dear Mr. Denley

Re: NH&MRC Publication Review (your ref: 2002/058373)

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 2003 regarding the review of the publications, *Boxing Injuries 1993*, *Head and Neck Injuries in Football: Guidelines 1994* and *Football Injuries of the Head and Neck 1994*.

The Australasian College of Sports Physicians recognises that each of these reports deals with a significant problem within the field of sports medicine that creates a high level of community concern. The role of the NH&MRC in addressing these issues would be of considerable benefit to the community.

All of the reports require major revision or rewriting due to the new evidence that has become available since their publication. A Medline review in each of these areas reveals many thousands of new publications in those respective fields, which makes the scope and findings of those reports now outdated and in many cases factually incorrect and potentially dangerous.

As both an expert body and stakeholder in this area, the ACSP recommends that the NH&MRC form new expert panels in each area with a brief to rewrite the reports using a more structured and evidence-based format. The ACSP recommends Dr Paul McCrory as its representative on those panels. Dr McCrory was previously involved in the original NH&MRC reports.

Yours sincerely

Dr Paul McCrory PhD FRACP FACSP  
President

cc: Ms Florence Adofo-Kissi,  
Mrs Cathy Clutton ✓  
Centre for Health Advice, Policy and Ethics, NH&MRC

6. Football injuries of the head and neck 1994

Submission 3.

Australian Medical Association (Victoria) Limited and  
Medical Society of Victoria Inc.



3 June 2004

Professor Alan Pettigrew  
Chief Executive Officer  
NH&MRC  
MDP 100  
GPO Box 9848  
Canberra ACT 2601

Recd CEO Unit  
9/6/04  
1263

Dear Professor Pettigrew

A member of AMA Victoria has raised concerns about the long term consequences of soccer players heading the ball. He has drawn my attention to a Norwegian study, which is attached. I am aware that the Council published guidelines in 1995 entitled Head and neck injuries in football: guidelines for prevention and management (in Australian football, rugby union, rugby league and soccer, which are currently under review.

You will note that the 1995 guidelines make recommendations about data collection, specifically that a national registry of deaths, brain injury with permanent functional disability and cervical spine injury should be established and also that a central fund for specific research in the prevention and management of injuries be established. Clearly such activities are essential to establishing a firm policy footing about sports injuries. I would be grateful if you could advise whether these recommendations have been implemented and if so how data and research findings can be accessed. If the recommendations have not been implemented could you advise which authority or body was expected to have carriage of these matters.

Looking forward to the current review, it appears that the existing guidelines dealt with prevention of acute injuries rather than looking at the prevention of adverse consequences of chronic insults to the brain. I believe that NH&MRC guidance would therefore be beneficial in this regard, especially as there is such a high level of participation in soccer in Australia. If indeed the Council does determine there are long term consequences of heading soccer balls including any effect on children and young people, then presumably the new guidelines will need to include a more explicit education campaign for parents and players.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely

Dr Paul Woodhouse  
Director, Policy Development

Manion  
18/6/04

Kris - for the  
publication review

cc 15/6