Qhubeka! Moving forward with SASMA

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CYCLING IS A MEDICINE TOO!
Featured on the cover of this month’s BJSM, Team MTN Qhubeka combines experienced and emerging continental riders from Germany, Spain, Lithuania and Italy, with home-grown African talent from South Africa, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Ruanda. Arguably, there is no other cycling team that better represents genetic diversity.

Uniquely, this elite cycling team also has a large community focus. It works closely with the Qhubeka foundation (http://www.qhubeka.org) which donates bicycles to communities who are environmentally conscious under the mantra ‘Mobilising kids with bikes’; a sort of rural Exercise is Medicine initiative!

Team MTN Qhubeka is far from being another African handout story. While still having to earn its stripes to compete in the Grand Tours, success in several of Europe’s Spring Classic races has set the cat among the peloton’s pigeons. Songezo Jim, an orphan from the townships of Cape Town, became the first black African to participate in the longest 1-day Classic on the racing calendar, the Milan Sanremo,1 a race won by team captain Gerald Ciolek. Ciolek also had a podium finish in stage 2 of the 7-day Tirreno Adriatico across Italy and won the 3-day Tour of West Flanders. Ethiopian rider Tsgabo Grmay won a stage in the Tour de Taiwan and finished second in the individual general classification.

The team’s ambitious goals are firmly underwritten by sports science and propelled by coaching from one of the world’s leading coaches, English Premier League football, ‘Dr ElM’ Bob Salis will provide impetus to the Exercise is Medicine initiative in South Africa (could Qhubeka community initiatives serve as another model?), the engaging and gregarious sports physician Michael Turner (UK) will no doubt entertain, Ron Maughan will head the nutrition stream while the BJSM’s very own Babette Pluim (the Netherlands) will contribute with her broad knowledge of clinical and publishing SEM.

Delegates are drawn from a wide range of disciplines including family medicine practitioners, sports physician, orthopaedic surgeons, radiologists, dieticians, chiropractors, sports scientists, podiatrists, physiotherapists and biokineticists, among other disciplines.

The congress will provide a strong scientific programme covering a diverse array of sports medicine topics, an intensive series of plenary sessions, keynote addresses, panel discussions, presentation of original research, practical workshops, breakfast seminars, a trade exhibition, extraordinary entertainment and an excellent social programme. The venue is a world class conferencing complex situated on a remote and wild coastline, home to the Zulu and Pondoro people and close to some of South Africa’s finest game parks. The nature of the venue and the programme allows for extensive networking between delegates in a relaxed and comfortable environment.


SOUTH AFRICAN SPORTS MEDICINE ASSOCIATION CONGRESS 2013... MORE DIVERSITY
The South African Sports Medicine Association (SASMA) has a focus not dissimilar to Team MTN Qhubeka—moving forward in SEM, growing our pool of African clinicians while collaborating internationally.

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JUNE’S EDITION OF BJSM... DIVERSITY IN PRINT
This South African-guided edition of BJSM promotes SASMA’s ambition of being ‘World class in Africa’ by highlighting important South African and international research under the theme of ‘Genetics and Performance’.

TUCKER TITILLATES, COILINS CONSOLIDATES AND PITSILADIS PARAPHRASES
A highlight is a follow-up article led by Ross Tucker (pp) to last year’s article on factors contributing to performance in exercise.2 Looking particularly at East African distance runners and sprinters of West African origin, the authors crystallise the key aspects of the debate of practice sufficiency or innate ability?

Tucker and coworkers made several references to the work of another genomics ‘guru’, Yannis Pitsiladis.3,4 In this issue (pp), Pitsiladis provides an excellent synopsis of the status quo of genetics research highlighting how different genomic research approaches (particularly the candidate gene approach vs genome-wide association studies) can influence the ability to detect smaller gene effects. Macolm Collins’ group publishes another piece of original research contributing the growing body of evidence linking specific single nucleotide polymorphisms to Achilles Tend inopathy (pp). As always, Professor Martin Schwellnus’ accompanying editorial adds a relevant clinical perspective, while Tom Best looks at the role of stem cells in angiogenesis and muscle healing (pp).

Editors’ license5 allows us to broaden the focus slightly (while maintaining an ‘African’ theme) to encompass African football screening (pp) and cardiac adaptation in African adolescent athletes (pp). Heart rate variability, travel fatigue and social media add further variety.

DIVERSITY AND PERFORMANCE: SASMA 2013
The Qhubeka philosophy encompasses both excellence and philanthropy drawing on internat ional and local talent. Like SASMA, it is an African entity that strives for global standards of excellence. Our close association with BJSM (accessible to members via a link on our website http://www.sasma.org.za) and our own South African journal of Sports Medicine (http://www.sasmaj.org.za) helps facilitate this. Enjoy this edition of BJSM and add to the genetic diversity of our Congress by joining us in October on the Wild Coast of South Africa.

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REFERENCES

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