Long live the conference: why BOSEM links up with #Sportskongres and how you can benefit

Evert Verhagen ¹, Birgitte Hougs Kjaer²

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¹Amsterdam Collaboration on Health & Safety in Sports, Department of Public and Occupational Health, Amsterdam Movement Sciences, Amsterdam UMC Locatie VUmc, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

²Department of Physical and Occupational Therapy & Institute of Sports Medicine, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Copenhagen University Hospital Bispebjerg and Frederiksberg, Copenhagen, Denmark

Correspondence to

Professor Evert Verhagen;
e.verhagen@amsterdamumc.nl

Undeniably we are looking back at two challenging years. The pandemic has impacted our lives at all levels and in more ways than we could have ever imagined. Conferences and meetings were cancelled or, in most cases, replaced with an online alternative. Likely your initial response was like ours, positive. After all, this implied less (costly) travel, easier access to meetings far away, and more chances to learn from world-class experts. Two years later, though, we start to see things differently. Our hunger for professional interaction with our colleagues is a reality. One of the first meetings to be held 'live' again is #Sportskongres, with a record number of 195 abstract submissions and at present above 500 registered attendants. For us, this is tangible proof that physical conferences have value and that we long for the opportunity to learn and discuss, not from the leisure of our couch but in the presence of our peers and colleagues.

REINVENTING THE CONFERENCE

It is unlikely that we will go back to what we once considered 'normal' anytime soon, if ever at all. The current pandemic will leave its mark on how we organise and manage our social life, our work and our conferences. And maybe this has been a wake-up call on other levels as well. For instance, while we were forced to be bound within the walls and safety of our homes, we also became more conscious of the environmental footprint we leave behind with our travelling.

Yes, we want physical conferences, but at the same time, we understand we have to re-invent the concept of the conference to align with our new—and future—reality. At *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine* (BOSEM), we are proud to explore this required evolution with #Sportskongres. A conference intended to be live and on-site in Copenhagen (Denmark) but acknowledging that there remains a big audience that can be reached with academic and clinical messages outside the boundaries of the three conference days. We believe that BOSEM is perfectly fit to be this conduit. We will grasp this opportunity

to explore and experiment with new ways to reach the broader Sports and Exercise Medicine community. And quite frankly, it is highly topical because even at this moment, despite the latest positive messages, the #Sportskongres organising committee cannot be completely sure about the conference format until the very start day of the conference.

NATURAL FIT

#Sportskongres is a natural fit for BOSEM. We hold similar values. We aim for science of the highest quality. We strive for science that informs clinical practice, ultimately benefiting the patient. And while we do so, we uphold our core values around diversity and inclusivity. For #Sportskongres, this shows in the conference committees and invited speakers, with proper representations of female members (41%) and invited speakers (39%). Of course, a more equal or even opposite distribution should be strived for. Furthermore, consider the 15 different nationalities of invited speakers—also from outside the Scandinavian countries—and a programme spanning topics across the broad array of Sports and Exercise Medicine, giving voice to multidisciplinary specialties that deal with athlete care. Additionally, the programme allows considerable room for contemporary issues highly debated, for instance, the female athlete, harassment and abuse in sports. Topics that make news headlines at the moment but which we as a Sports and Exercise Medicine community have not appropriately discussed yet.

WHAT WILL BE DONE

Here at BOSEM, we will publish the abstracts accepted by #Sportskongres. Then for a few days, we will give the keys of our journal to the conference organisation and the conference attendees. We will provide you with live and asynchronous coverage of the conference's highlights through our channels. We will cross-post these highlights on our website,

our blog and our Social Media channels. We will be at the conference and report from our perspective the key take-home messages as they are presented, and we will be sure to bring our camera and grab the speakers so they can explain in their own words what you can do to improve athletes' health and healthcare. We will bring the key messages of the conference to everyone, everywhere. Despite countless uncertainties surrounding the planning of #Sportskongress and the live knowledge sharing and socialisation that an event can perform, it is still a genuine goal for BOSEM to ensure knowledge sharing through alternative open channels.

Twitter Evert Verhagen @evertverhagen

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ORCID iD

Evert Verhagen <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9227-8234>