

Scapula Conference- University of Salford, 2nd-3rd October 2013

This was a very rare opportunity to see Ben Kibler and Tim Uhl outside their native home (USA), along with Klaus Bak and Len Funk.

For those of you who are “not *that* into shoulders”; Ben Kibler is an orthopaedic surgeon and medical director of the Lexington Clinic Sports Medicine Centre, in Kentucky, USA, who has published widely on the kinematics of the scapula in function and dysfunction of the shoulder. Tim Uhl originally worked with Ben as a physiotherapist, before moving to become associate professor at the University of Kentucky. Tim has published widely regarding the rehabilitation of the shoulder and carried out extensive research on the EMG activity around the shoulder with various rehabilitations exercises. Klaus Bak is a Senior Consultant at Shoulder and Elbow Unit, Department of Orthopedic Surgery, University Hospital Herlev, Copenhagen, Denmark who has an interest in the diagnosis of shoulder injuries and surgical management of complex shoulder injuries. Len Funk is an associate professor at Salford University and orthopedic surgeon who specializes in the management of shoulder and elbow injuries, who is prolific in the field of sport and is prolific in the field of education with respect to the shoulder as his web site shoulderdoc.co.uk bears testament.

The international faculty was supported by an international delegate list, with delegates attending from a far a field as Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Iran, which showed the rarity of having such a faculty assembled in Europe.

The main deliverer of information throughout the two days was Ben Kibler, who presented 11 sessions which ran to over 6 hours, which was quite a feat for a 67 year old. Despite the regular sound of one voice, each session was fresh and delivered with knowledge and freshness.

The conference was split into 3 basic sections; The Basics/the Scapula and Shoulder/ Clinical Application/Arm Pathology, which were delivered by a combination of lectures, videos and practical demonstrations.

Within the “Basics” section overviews were presented in order to establish areas of dysfunctional anatomy, the basic biomechanics of integrated coordinated segment activation and the role of the kinetic chain in shoulder dysfunction. This was followed by an interesting session on the role of the scapula in shoulder function, discussing how to maximize the lever systems to make movement more economical around the shoulder, and the effect that scapular dyskinesis (loss of scapular control) has on shoulder function. This has been one of the areas where Ben Kibler has been most prolific.

Within “scapula and shoulder/arm pathology” section an interesting presentation was given regarding the mechanics of the acromioclavicular joint, and the role of the scapula in dysfunction of the joint (and vice versa). Following this several presentations described the current thinking regarding impingement syndrome, rotator cuff disease and the scapular involvement in this process, with an interesting presentation on Scapular Muscle Detachment- a rare (and probably under diagnosed) pathology.

The conclusion of day 1, covered the throwing shoulder, and how the scapula contributes to overhead throwing function and how it affects shoulder injury in the overhead athlete and its role in superior labral injuries. Finally the association of scapular function affects elbow loads and

function, with note to assess the shoulder in the evaluation of elbow injuries.

Day 2 gave Ben Kibler some opportunity for rest, as he only delivered three sessions, the day was book-ended by Len Funk who started the day with an interesting presentation on the snapping scapula (one of those rare things that can sometimes be resistant to physiotherapy management), and concluded the day with a comical presentation on a scapula dyskinesis in a cat- although we weren't told it was a cat when the objective and (limited) "subjective" information was given.

Klaus Bak provided information regarding the role of the scapula in swimmers, and possible areas to modify in training and treatment in order to reduce the prospect of injury, and Tim Uhl has able to do his stuff , and excite the physios in the audience as he provided research evidence for the role of the kinetic chain in rehabilitation. This was followed by Ben Kibler presenting on the "Orthopedic Surgeon's role in rehabilitation", which was very didactic and proscriptive, and you could feel the mood in the auditorium change, as one, by one the hackles of each and every physio in the room were raised as he finished with "this is the way physios will do the rehabilitation of my patients, and if not they will not treat my patients!". The potential riot was defused by some statesmanship from Len Funk (who sensing the mood from the physios in the audience) stood up and explained that things were a little different in this country, as physios are autonomous practitioners, who agreed the protocols post surgery with the surgeons, on an individual case. Riot prevented!

The final part of the day revolved mainly around practical demonstrations of assessment, with a "live case" (one of the post graduate nurses bravely

subjected herself to clinical examination in front of 150 people), and then a discussion of the possible rehabilitation protocol to follow.

Over the two days there was much information to absorb, but the provision of a hefty handbook which contained copies of most of the presentations made it easy for note taking and post course reflection.

There were some new things presented and some reinforcement of previous concepts, which made the course an all round success, and I am grateful of the funding from the MACP which contributed to the total cost of attending this conference.

Dr Ian Horsley PhD, MCSP MMACP