

# 'Football as Medicine'

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Editors of the book *Football as Medicine - Prescribing Football as Global Health Promotion*. Credit: Bo Kousgaard, University of Southern Denmark

*Football as Medicine: Prescribing Football for Global Health Promotion* collates 15 years of research when describing the effects of football training on cardiovascular, metabolic and musculoskeletal fitness, and providing up-to-date knowledge of the impact of recreational football

for target populations like children, type 2 diabetes patients, cancer patients, people with mental health conditions, the socially deprived and older people.

The book discusses the significance of football for public [health](#) and assesses the efficacy of football interventions by clubs and community sport development programs and is edited by professor in Sport and Health Peter Krstrup, University of Southern Denmark and Daniel Parnell, Senior Lecturer in Sport Business from University of Liverpool, UK.

## **Potential for global health promotion**

The book is based on extensive research into the health effects of football.

"To make a long story short: Our research shows that football is broad-spectrum medicine, a polypill against lifestyle diseases. The reason for that is that football is an effective and intense hybrid training type, combining [strength training](#), endurance training and HIIT training, with broad-spectrum health effects on heart function, blood pressure, fat mass, cholesterol, muscle strength, postural balance, bone mineralization," professor Peter Krstrup explains.

"Football is best practice exercise, but more than that: Football is a fun, social and popular sporting activity, with great potential for creating adherence to an active lifestyle and with great potential for global health promotion," Peter Krstrup stipulates.



Elderly football players during a small-sided football training session in Frederikssund, Denmark Credit: Bo Kousgaard

## **Now is the time for action**

"We are delighted to see the Football as Medicine book through to completion and now publication. The list of contributors is incredible and the knowledge and learning available within the book is testament to their respective and cumulative decades of work undertaken on this truly unique agenda," Dan Parnell says.

Dr. Parnell adds: "This book signals a landmark moment and arguably a line in the sand with respect to what we know works for the Football as Medicine agenda. We now need to make sure policymakers, managers and practitioners are equipped with the know-how to take action. Whether this is delivering effective football-based public health



interventions, or building the case to protect existing football playing fields.

Ultimately, now is the time for action and this book gives those in power the understanding and information to make evidence-based decisions to expand and extend the potential impact of football delivering health-related outcomes."

## **Football is Medicine—it is time for pupils, people and patients to play**

"In collaboration with the Danish FA (DBU) and the Danish Sports Confederation (DIF) we have developed a series of strong evidence-based football concepts using small-sided football training sessions for school children, for untrained adults and for patients that are suitable for large-scale implementation," Peter Krstrup continues.

When football is played in accordance with those evidence-based concepts entitled "FIT FIRST," "11 for Health" (school children), Football Fitness (untrained adults and elderly), and football for patients, e.g., Football for the Heart, FC Prostate, Football Fitness ABC (After Breast Cancer) and Football for Socially Deprived, it is safe and feasible for everybody with few injury-related side-effects, also for elderly and patients with hypertension, type 2 diabetes and prostate cancer.

With its multi-disciplinary approach, the book is a valuable resource for students, researchers and practitioners working in physical activity and health, [public health](#), health promotion and medicine, as well as [football](#) and sport business management, sport and exercise science and the sociology of sport.

**More information:** Peter Krstrup et al. Football as Medicine, (2019).

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