



GAMES Study – Information Sheet

Thank you for showing an interest in this research project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, we thank you. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you, and we thank you for considering our request. You can download this information sheet to keep.

Study Title: Games Athletes Medical Evaluation and Status Study (GAMES Study)

What is the aim of this project?

International research has shown that Olympians live on average 3 years longer compared to the general population. However, this has never been researched in Aotearoa New Zealand. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the increased longevity is a result of those years of elite athletic training and competition or lifestyle beyond athletic retirement.

Exercise is protective against a large number of medical conditions and diseases. However, at an elite level over many years there may increase an increased risk for some health conditions.

Therefore, the aim of this research is to describe the health status of New Zealand Olympians, Paralympians and Commonwealth Games athletes, as they age as compared with a sibling or close friend who has not competed in sport internationally. Additionally, we would like to determine if high athlete level training affects the health of the athletes during the lifespan and in what way.

What type of participants are being sought?

We are seeking participation from all New Zealand, current and retired, athletes who have competed, at least once, during the Olympics, Paralympics and/or Commonwealth Games. Furthermore, to create an age and sex matched sample of non-athletes (to act as a comparison group) athletes who agree to participate will be asked to identify a sibling (preferred), relative or friend who is of the same sex and of similar age (within 5 years). These individuals should not have represented New Zealand in any sport at any level.

What will participants be asked to do?

If you decide to participate, everyone will need to fill out one questionnaire. Athlete participants only, will be asked to fill out an additional questionnaire. The approximate time to fill out the main questionnaire will be 30-45 minutes. You do not have to do all the questions at once, you can work your way through in several sessions if this works better.

Is there any risk of discomfort or harm from participation?

The nature of some questions can be perceived as personal or uncomfortable because they relate to your health. You can always decide not to answer one, or multiple, specific questions. If there is anything more serious, please contact Dr. Xaviour Walker whose contact details are at the end of this form. In addition, only the primary investigator and the project coordinator will have access to identifiable data. All other members of the team will only have access to de-identified data.

What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

Our questionnaire asks about you and your health status, physical activity, nutrition, and mental health. Retired athletes will also be asked about your nutrition and exercise during the year you have last competed in the Olympics, Paralympics and/or Commonwealth Games.

All the data collected will be securely stored so that only these specific researchers have access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for at least 10 years in secure storage. Data will be de-identified for long term storage. We will always be able to reconnect data with names should participants in the long term want their information withdrawn from the study.

The results of the project may be published in international journals and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand). Every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity. Furthermore, we will provide a summary of study results to the participants through the NZ Olympic Committee newsletter.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to you.

Will participants be compensated for their time?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

What if participants have any questions?

If you have questions about our project, please feel free to contact:

Principal Investigator: Dr. Xaviour Walker
Email address: xaviour.walker@otago.ac.nz
Phone number: 022-630-7152

Assistant Research Fellow: Lara Vlietstra
Email address: lara.vlietstra@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph+643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

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