

# Document, create and translate knowledge: the mission of ReFORM, the Francophone IOC Research Centre for Prevention of Injury and Protection of Athlete Health

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The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has supported athletes' health

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protection<sup>1</sup> by funding research centres dedicated to prevention and treatment of sports-related injuries and illnesses.<sup>2</sup> After establishing four centres in 2009,<sup>2</sup> the IOC research centres network expanded to 9 institutions in 2014<sup>3</sup> and the 2019 round recognised 11 centres.<sup>4</sup> Here we introduce ReFORM—an international French-speaking network of five institutions.<sup>5</sup>

## WHO IS REFORM?

ReFORM stands for *Réseau Francophone Olympique de la Recherche en Médecine du Sport*, and we embrace the IOC's vision to foster international collaborations.<sup>5</sup> Five intercontinental countries created this French-speaking Olympic network for Research in Sports Medicine, with support from their national Olympic Committees (table 1):

- ▶ French National Institute of Sport (INSEP), Paris, France.
- ▶ Physical Medicine and Sport Traumatology Department (SportS<sup>2</sup>), University and University Hospital of Liège, Belgium.
- ▶ Luxembourg Institute of Research in Orthopaedics, Sports Medicine and Science (LIROMS), Luxembourg.
- ▶ Institut National du Sport du Québec (INS), Montréal, Québec, Canada.
- ▶ Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology, Geneva University Hospitals (HUG), Switzerland.

Together, they serve hundreds of elite athletes and are at the forefront of high-level sports medicine and research in their respective countries.

## WHAT MAKES REFORM UNIQUE?

ReFORM is the only IOC Research Centre where French is the first common language. As an official Olympic language (with English), French has a limited representation

in the scientific output of the IOC, despite being spoken by more than 300 million people in 50 countries worldwide, including sports stakeholders (ie, coaches, physicians and athletes). We will help bring quality French-language evidence and practice experience to the anglophone world and help mobilise anglophone sports medicine and sports physiotherapy to francophone countries.<sup>6</sup> As an active participant of the Francophonie (French-speaking world) in Sports Medicine and the IOC, ReFORM will bring quality francophone evidence and practice to the anglophone world.

Another strength of this consortium lies in its collaborative effort, gathering strong complementary expertise in the various subspecialisations of sports medicine, in line with the IOC Medical Commission objectives. These fields include exercise medicine and physiology, sports cardiology, orthopaedic surgery, as well as prevention and rehabilitation of sports injuries. Scientific experience is also well represented with extended expertise in biomechanics, epidemiology, imaging, clinical biology, psychology and sociology.

We appreciate that conducting efficient research across five major institutions disseminated around the globe comes with its own peculiar challenges. Each centre has different healthcare and sports performance systems, as well as political and academic environments, in addition to being geographically distant. To catalyse synergies between the centres, a scientific coordinator (GM) is responsible for setting and following up ReFORM's research projects. This challenging position enables the five centres to streamline collaborative work.

## WHAT ARE THE FOCUS AREAS FOR REFORM?

ReFORM currently follows three main approaches:

- ▶ *Documenting sports injury prevention on-field practices* through surveying French-speaking sports communities' stakeholders about theoretical knowledge on sports injuries, their management, history and outcome, as well as existing education tools. The current focus lies on concussions and shoulder injuries. Mapping injury prevention practice and knowledge across several countries and cultures will open the path to tailored training and prevention programmes, adapted to the specificities of each community.
- ▶ *Create knowledge on injury prevention and athlete protection* through ReFORM's resources, allowing tackling each aspect of the well-known

**Table 1** ReFORM members and respective expertise

Country	Institution	Main expertise
Belgium	Physical Medicine and Sport Traumatology Department (SportS <sup>2</sup> ), University and University Hospital of Liège	Biomechanics, exercise physiology, clinical biology, multidisciplinary (sub)elite athlete medical follow-up
Canada	Institut National du Sport du Québec (INS), Montréal	Data science, multidisciplinary elite athlete medical follow-up, load monitoring, neuroscience
France	French National Institute of Sport (INSEP), Paris	Multidisciplinary elite athlete medical follow-up, epidemiology, imaging, biomechanics
Luxembourg	Luxembourg Institute of Research in Orthopaedics, Sports Medicine and Science (LIROMS)	Orthopaedics, biomechanics, exercise physiology, sports cardiology
Switzerland	Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology, Geneva University Hospitals (HUG)	Epidemiology, orthopaedics, biomechanics, musculoskeletal biology

sports injury prevention sequence<sup>7</sup>; the following themes will be addressed:

- Epidemiology: taking part in international initiatives to feed large injury registries and considering setting up new ones.
  - Aetiology: better understanding factors and mechanisms of injury occurrence, with a multifactorial approach (eg, biomechanics, physiology and psychology) and different analytical methods (eg, machine learning) with specific injury models (eg, anterior cruciate ligament, shoulder and lower limb muscle injuries).
  - Prevention: implementing community-tailored education programmes within the scope of the concussion project and beyond. Thanks to the proximity and strong collaborative interfaces developed with athletes and staffs, individualised prevention strategies will also be developed and continuously evaluated.
- *Disseminating knowledge on prevention and protection* by providing the French-speaking sports community with high levels of theoretical and practical knowledge on sports medicine and athletes' health and while learning from the community practices. This bidirectional flow between the clinical research teams and the sports communities represents a unique opportunity for integrated knowledge translation. ReFORM has also started translating the IOC Consensus Statements into French as a milestone to make information accessible for both scientific and sports communities.

## REFORM'S VISION

ReFORM offers a multidisciplinary, multi-cultural and multicentre approach and collaborates on innovative international research to support the success of its

various partners in the quest for Olympism. To enhance the health and prevent injuries of all athletes, ReFORM strives to increase knowledge and expertise, through a close relationship with sport stakeholders, within the *Francophonie* and beyond.

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