**TOPIC:** 1st day: From ancient Olympia to Modern Times: The History of military sports

**TITLE:** Exercise for health: from antiquity to modern times

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**INTRODUCTION:** Body movement, as a result of muscular function, has been a key element in human evolution. Thanks to body movement, early humans were able to feed themselves, to protect their young, or to travel to more secure residences. However, to accomplish the aforementioned, humans had also to be healthy. This harmonic co-existence between health and body movement (exercise) is actually known since antiquity, while contemporary science has repeatedly confirmed their association by identifying numerous biological functions which link them. In contrast, we know of no biological mechanism capable of combating the endemic hypo-activity of the industrialised world.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:** Ancient Greeks believed that physical fitness and mental clarity were two sides of the same coin; training was a civic duty, rather than a lifestyle choice. They also knew that an athlete requires stress exposure to trigger an adaptation, followed by optimal recovery periods. Without the latter, athletes will not experience performance benefits, while they knew well the importance of protein consumption for building muscle. On the other hand, a warrior required to survive on little food and endure extreme sleep deprivation. Recent reports highlight the need to increase health-related fitness; our urban life-style has negatively affected activity levels and increased cases of morbidity and mortality from infectious and noncommunicable disease. Even military personnel are not exempt; a health report from the Pentagon (2015) suggests that more than half all U.S. troops are clinically overweight, indicating that serious strategies must be developed for disease prevention and treatment.

**PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CISM:** NON APPLICABLE

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** The authors report no relevant conflicts of interest.

**PRESENTATION TYPE:** Oral

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