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Contact: Michele Hutchins
(603) 238- 6468



Dr. Giovan Delivers Keynote at NHATA Annual Meeting
Message focuses on importance of scapula positioning in shoulder conditions

PLYMOUTH, N.H.--- Dr. Michael Giovan, orthopedic surgeon at Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine Clinic and head team physician at Plymouth State University, presented *The Scapula: The Underappreciated Cause of Shoulder Dysfunction & Pain* at the New Hampshire Athletic Training Association’s 2010 Clinical Symposium and Annual Meeting. His presentation emphasized the importance of recognizing the scapula (shoulder blade) as a significant focal point for both preventing and treating upper arm and shoulder injuries.



Dr Giovan states, “The scapula, or shoulder blade, has historically been overlooked as a major cause of shoulder pain due to the focus on the shoulder joint. However, the new school of surgeons are turning their attention to the improper positioning of the scapula not only as a root cause of pain, but further increasing dysfunction following an injury.”

Getting an exact picture of how the shoulder blade is positioned is complex explains, Dr. Giovan. This is due to the numerous planes of motion associated with movement of the shoulder blade including rotations, translation and tilting. Athletes and young people can be particularly susceptible to shoulder injuries as a result of repetitive motion—pitching, tennis, volleyball, swimming, golf— and improper strength training.

“We work out primarily what we can see in the mirror,” says Dr. Giovan. “meaning the chest and the arms. This results in a strength imbalance between the chest and arms versus the scapular stabilizers of the back. People don’t just develop functional problems overnight, it is a slow progression. By raising awareness with the athletic trainers about the importance of the

shoulder blade's proper positioning and strength, we can prevent many of the common shoulder injuries we see.”

While preventing athletic shoulder injuries was the focus of Dr. Giovan's keynote lecture, it is not just athletes who are susceptible to shoulder conditions. Posture and balance, or rather the lack of, can lead to problems. Backpacks, shoulder bags, baby slings and overemphasizing chest/deltoid development during strength training are everyday contributors to improper positioning of the scapula leading to dysfunction and injury.

“Look at elite cyclists and climbers,” he says, “they are not physically big people, but exceptionally efficient and functional muscle tissue. This is where the benefits of lower weight and high repetition can be realized. For every one repetition you do to work the chest muscles, you should do two for the back. Additionally core strength needs to be further emphasized, particularly in men.”

Dr. Giovan specializes in shoulder, knee and elbow surgery, having completed a fellowship in Shoulder and Elbow/Sports Medicine at The Core Institute in Sun City West, Ariz. He obtained his Doctor of Medicine from George Washington University School of Medicine, and did his internship and residency at Maricopa Medical Center Orthopaedic Training Program in Phoenix, Ariz.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Giovan call Plymouth Orthopedics & Sports Medicine Clinic at (603) 536-1565. The office is located on the second floor, Speare Memorial at Boulder Point, 103 Boulder Point Drive in Plymouth.

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