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Harnessing the Power of Sport to Promote Global Health in the Asia Pacific Region

Panel: Life and Longevity

It is undeniable that sport, as a cultural phenomenon, holds near universal appeal for all humanity regardless whether people hail from countries rich or poor, large or small, old or new, east or west, or whose population is largely hetero- or homogeneous. In the early 21st Century, the Asia Pacific region has taken its rightful place at the table of globalized sport, manifested by its appetite and capacity to organize mega sporting events. With the Olympic Games in Sydney (2000), Beijing (2008), and Tokyo (2020); the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang; the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Korea and Japan; and the Rugby World Cups in Australia (2003), New Zealand (2011), and Japan (2019), the Asia Pacific region has signaled its ascendancy as a major player on the global sporting scene. Because of the capacity of sport to command peoples' interest and incite their passion, its efficacy as a tool to evoke behavioral change, including healthier lifestyles, is unparalleled. This paper will assess the impact that these mega sporting events and popular sport activities have on public health in the Asia Pacific region.