



THE 39th World Medical & Health Games ARE COMING TO MALTA

Sports Director **Pierre Chicco** talks Medigames with TheSynapse.

TS: WHAT ARE THE WORLD MEDICAL & HEALTH GAMES, OR MEDIGAMES FOR SHORT?

The World Medical & Health Games are the world's largest sporting event for health professionals, created in 1978 by the French Newspaper, *Le Quotidien du Médecin*, with the purpose of bringing together professionals in the field of sports medicine. Since its start the event changed hands, but has maintained the great momentum and passion with which it was started, to become what it is today. Following a string of yearly Medigames at such places as Canada, France, Ireland, Austria, Hungary and many others, this year the 39th edition of the World Medical and Health is being held in Malta **for the first time**.

TS: WHAT HAPPENS DURING THIS WORLD-FAMOUS SPORTING HEALTH EVENT?

The event itself is a week-long getaway for professionals and students in the health sector and it is as much a vacation as it is a professional event. Every year, up to **2000 participants from over 40 nationalities** come together to compete in the Olympic spirit. You can say the event is three-fold: there are sports games for 26 disciplines - athletics, tennis, sailing, football, basketball ... and everything in between; an international sports medicine symposium; as well as a networking event. Each part is important, but we pride ourselves in creating a platform where professionals and students in the sports medicine sector can meet their peers from the international sphere. Every year this proves to be an excellent opportunity to share ideas, socialise, relax and have fun, meet old friends and make new ones, and clinching connections for life, while indulging in the sports, participants are so passionate about.

TS: WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THESE GAMES?

I love sports and have always wanted to work in sports and sporting events. I've been organising the World Medical & Health Games since 2006 - it has given me great pleasure to successfully organise this event across the world; it is also most satisfying to see this event grow, year after year.

TS: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE MALTA AS A DESTINATION FOR THIS YEAR'S MEDIGAMES?

We had already organised another sporting event in Malta back in 2015, and it was quite a success. I think Malta is a great destination for the World Medical & Health Games for many reasons. For starters it is perfect as a touristic location, and offers our participants a fantastic holiday destination with good weather, lots of history, nature and sea. Moreover, it has many well-equipped sporting venues, which due to the country's size are all within easy reach. Not to mention the good flight connection. It is imperative that this event is not just a sports



The French team of beach volleyball during the semi-final, Catalans Beach, Marseille (France)

competition event, but a relaxing, exciting and informative experience for those who participate, and Malta is perfect to make that happen.

Moreover, we have had a great response both from the authorities and professionals alike. Malta Tourism Authority is our main sponsor and Sports Malta has helped us a lot too, as well as Air Malta, Conventions Malta and our destination management company, MPE.

There are also Maltese professionals involved in the event, notably Dr Lucienne Attard, a sport physician - also secretary of the Maltese Association for Sports & Exercise Medicine, executive board member for the Maltese Olympic Committee and Chairperson of the National Anti-Doping Organisation - who was very supportive and helpful. Dr Danica Bonello Spiteri, a sports physician and athlete, and Robert Grech, President of Osteopathy Malta, were very involved and supportive of the event too.

TS: WHAT ARE THE MAIN POINTS OF THE SYMPOSIUM?

The symposium is the cornerstone of this event; it is where professionals come together to keep themselves updated about important topics. Accredited by the UEMS (European Union of Medical Specialists), the symposium is chaired by Dr André Monroche (President of the French Society of Exercise and Sport Medicine between 2001 and 2005) and vice-chaired by Prof. Xavier Bigard (medical director of the International Cycling Union, scientific advisor to the French Anti-Doping Agency, and President of the French Society of Exercise and Sport Medicine till December 2017).

This year's main theme is *Lower Limb Pathologies in Sport*, and the three sub-themes are *Exercise of Sports Medicine in France and the World*, *Sports in Hot Countries*, and *Doping Prevention*. The symposium programme is divided in two, one session dedicated to the symposium sub-themes and another session dedicated to free scientific communication, when the floor is opened to anyone wishing to discuss a paper or topic they wish.

This presents an opportunity for local professionals in sports medicine, as well as students interested in pursuing a career in this sector, to share their expertise in this year's themes as well as benefit from the information and connections that come with an event like this.



Prof. Xavier Bigard, Vice-President of the International Sport Medicine Symposium - Marseille (France)



Start of the second stage of cycling - Marseille (France)

TS: IMPORTANT DETAILS TO REMEMBER?

The 39th World Medical & Health Games will held from the 16 till the 23 June within the Olympic Village which is going to be based in St Paul's Bay. Registration for the event can be done online at www.medigames.com with a point of contact at info@medigames.com. It is open for all health professionals and health students; there are also sports and educational activities for children under 16 years of age, to ensure that the event is as family friendly as possible. We hope that a maximum of Maltese participants will come to share this week of sports, confraternity and scientific exchange.



2nd sailing regatta in the harbour of Marseille (France)



Javelin competition - Matin Wohlwend, Norway Team - Bronze medal

