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## COMMENTARY

### Tribute to Dr. Roy Shephard: Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines

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#### Abstract

This commentary highlights the important influence Dr. Roy Shephard has had upon the development of Canada's physical activity guidelines, and the promotion of the health benefits of physical activity.

#### Introduction

##### *Personal Reflections*

I was "introduced" to the extensive contributions of Dr. Roy Shephard in 1985 during my exercise physiology class at Laurentian University. The professor was Dr. Ken Sidney, who had been a PhD student of Dr. Shephard's and Dr. Sidney enjoyed assigning readings from his mentor. The next year I was doing my MSc (and eventually PhD) in the graduate program in Exercise Science at the University of Toronto where Dr. Shephard was the Director. All graduate students in the program were required to attend the Seminar Course Monday afternoon from 4:00-6:00 pm for the duration of their studies. So for me, this was from 1986-1990.

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Dr. Shephard rarely missed a seminar and regardless of the topic area, knew more than the invited speaker, visiting scholar or graduate student presenting. The graduate students would congregate after each seminar and marvel at the breadth of encyclopedic knowledge of Dr. Shephard. This admiration has not waned in the 25 years since I first attended that seminar class.

I was fortunate enough to be the Graduate Student representative for Exercise Science while I was at the University of Toronto and this allowed me to get to know Dr. Shephard outside of the classroom. Because of this relationship, when I began my career at the University of New Brunswick I was comfortable in approaching him to collaborate with me on research grants and eventually a manuscript (Tremblay et al., 2001). I must admit that receiving his curriculum vitae for a grant submission was like a novice hockey player getting an assist from Wayne Gretzky – I literally spent hours reading through it and trying to comprehend how someone can produce so much in so many areas of exercise science.

It should come as no surprise that Dr. Shephard, along with his good friend and colleague Dr. Claude Bouchard, were instrumental in the development of the original Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines.

### *Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines 1998*

In 1995 the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology and the Fitness Program of Health Canada initiated a process that led to the first Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (Sharratt and Hearst, 2007). The scientific underpinning of the guidelines was informed through the commissioning of two comprehensive scientific reviews: one focused on behavioural and psychosocial research related to the guidelines (Brawley and Gauvin, 1996), the other based on a review of the biological evidence (Shephard and Bouchard, 1996). This scientific leadership by Dr. Shephard and others informed the development of the first Canadian physical activity guidelines. The first Canadian Physical Activity Guides for Healthy Active Living (Health Canada and CSEP, 1998) were released in conjunction with the 1998 Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) Scientific Conference in Fredericton, New Brunswick. I had the privilege of being host and Chair of the conference. The launch of the guides was a huge success and propelled Canada further forward as global leaders in physical activity and public health.

As an aside, I was invited by Dr. Shephard to write a chapter on Endocrine Factors in Endurance for the Second Edition of the Encyclopedia of Sports Medicine – Endurance in Sport (Tremblay and Copeland, 2000) that Dr. Shephard was editing with Per-Olof Astrand and I was due to give him my first draft when he arrived at the conference. He arrived at about 4:00 pm on the day the conference started and we had the paper draft of the chapter ready for him when he registered for the conference. At about 5:30 pm, as I was doing my final preparations to open the conference at 6:00 pm, he handed me

his comprehensive review with all of the style copy-editing completed. I had the chapter off my desk for 90 minutes. Dr. Astrand once confided to me at a meeting that he enjoyed editing books with Dr. Shephard because not only did Roy do almost all of the chapter editing, he also wrote the chapters if any authors were late with their submissions!

### *Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines 2011*

The process and events leading to the development of the revised Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines has been published elsewhere (Tremblay et al., 2007a; Tremblay et al., 2010; Tremblay et al., 2011). Dr. Shephard was co-author on three of the manuscripts serving as foundation papers for the guideline revisions (Tremblay et al., 2007a; Tremblay et al., 2007b; Warburton et al., 2007). Furthermore, Dr. Shephard was present and instrumental at meetings leading up to the final preparation of the new Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (CSEP and PHAC, 2009; Tremblay et al., 2011) despite being retired several years earlier. Dr. Shephard's immense knowledge base, unparalleled experience and coherent wisdom not only provided much needed guidance through the guideline development process, but also provided reassurance that we were on the right track. His contributions to the original and revised guidelines were instrumental to their success.

It should come as little surprise that Dr. Shephard's expert contributions to developing physical activity recommendations has not been contained to Canada. Dr. Shephard was a Senior Reviewer for the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health in 1996 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996).

### Summary

It has been a pleasure and inspiration to work with, and learn from Dr. Shephard over the past 25 years. I hope such a privilege continues well into the future.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to CSEP for leading and championing the original development and subsequent revisions to the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines and to Dr. Roy Shephard for his years of dedicated service to CSEP and the global exercise science community.

### Qualifications

The author's qualifications are as follows: Mark Tremblay Ph.D.

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