

As

Event Organizers,

Event Providers,

Medical doctors,

we request

the resumption and maintenance of outdoor sporting events,
for health-sport.

The University of Canterbury has recently published (September 2020) a long-awaited study to evaluate the transmission of Coronavirus during outdoor activities (Weed, Foad, & Carter, 2020). This literature review, is based on 35 different contributions from around the world. Among these, 14 articles have been formally included and 21 allow to provide context and cautionary elements.

What the studies teach us...

The multiple sources compiled by the University of Canterbury study conclude that the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is low in outdoor activities. These conclusions are reinforced by the presence of very rare examples of outdoor transmission of COVID-19 in everyday life. The authors conclude that it is reasonable to assume that **the risk of transmission outdoors is very low when barrier measures are followed.**

Conversely, the authors remain lucid about the effects of transmission during mass gatherings. These gatherings may thus be likely to generate an indirect transmission from the activities they generate, such as common movements of people and gatherings in bars. Thus, it is not the outdoor gathering itself that is the source of transmission but other associated higher risk movements prior to the event. It is therefore advisable to ask the surrounding bars, restaurants and leisure companies to adhere to the strengthening of barrier measures, for the space of a day or a weekend.

The authors also draw our attention to the fact that the risk of transmission outdoors increases as the size, density and duration of gatherings increase.

Finally, the authors point out the lack of evidence on the impact of low temperatures on the transmission rate itself. The only indirect effect is that extreme temperatures, both cold and hot, encourage people to congregate in enclosed spaces, which are more pleasant but with a higher risk of transmission.

An already organized sector for the respect of barrier measures

The events organized in August and September 2020 in France demonstrated that the outdoor sports sector has been able to organize itself with rigor and professionalism. All of the events that took place were a success for the territories and a breath of fresh air for the participants and economic players. **The organizers were all able to guarantee that the events were held in a safe and sanitary manner, which was a source of hope.**



Figure 1 Summary of major federal health principles for the organization of outdoor sporting events (FFA, 2020) (Ohly, et al., 2020)

On the largest gatherings, adapting the management of spectator flows should make it possible to dilute the affluence in areas of density. This is a key point to **make social distancing possible**. In mixed zones, this distancing can be guaranteed simply by restricting the access of the relatives into the feed-in stations. In high-density public areas, spectator capacity must be limited and flows controlled and accounted for. Typically, this control must be carried out on the initial and final portions of the races as well as in emblematic locations: mountain tops, stage villages, etc. Finally, the deployment of health ambassadors in all the areas with high affluence should be used to remind people of the collective health safety instructions with educational methods.



Figure 2 Grands principes de gestion du public

... and a sector ready to go even further towards pre-screening and contact tracing.

In addition to passive health protection tools, health actors of the sport event industry are now able to propose active and gradual mechanisms to reinforce the health security of events:

- The sending of **health forms** submitted prior to the travel of people to the event (participants, service providers, volunteers) aims to reduce the risk of contamination at the event, to remind participants of the signs of illness, and to ensure contact tracing. This knowledge of the people present makes it possible to advise and closely monitor the most at-risk groups, even after the event. These follow-ups are carried out entirely by the event's physicians, without impacting the tracing cells of the public services.
- The implementation of **a physical health screening** at the arrival at the event with temperature control allows a better control while contributing to the health education of the people.
- Finally, the health actors are able to carry out PCR or antigenic tests on site. Nevertheless, such an approach can only be carried out in full **consultation with the health authorities**. Indeed, the objective is not to embolize the regional screening strategy, with private industry, but to work in conjunction, for the implantation of strategies to carry out a safe event.

A low hospital admission rate of running events

The impact of sporting and cultural gatherings and activities on the demand on hospital structures was a criterion considered at the time of the health crisis in March 2020. This criterion also led to limiting the types of activities authorized during this period.

The study (MARYNIAK, et al., 2020), involving one million registrants, showed that road running and trail running events have a very limited impact on the local healthcare system.

Indeed, the average rate of hospital admissions is limited to one admission per 4,000 road running registrants and one admission per 1,000 trail running registrants. Moreover, in the vast majority of cases, these admissions are radiological or biological control admissions that do not result in hospitalization. This criterion of concern can therefore legitimately be labelled as extremely low for outdoor running events and will not increase the burden of the health system.

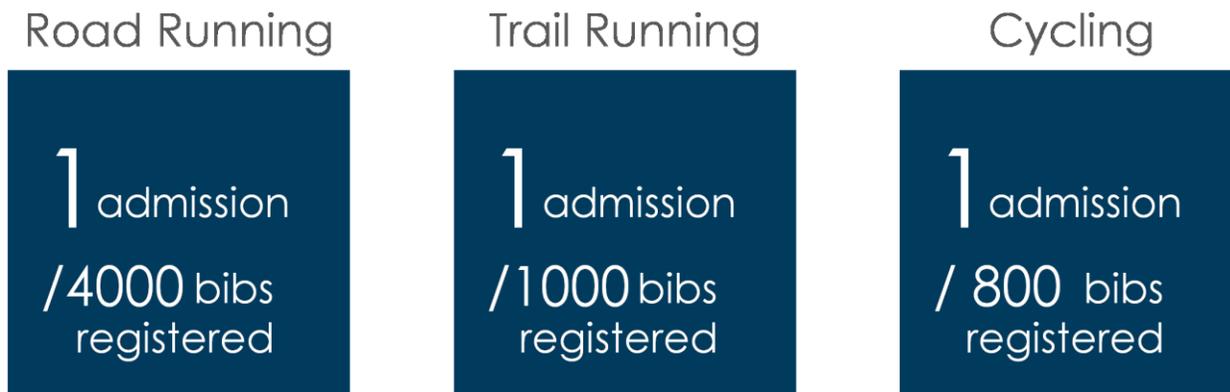


Figure 3. Mean hospital admission rate for running events, based on one million bibs registered (MARYNIAK, et al., 2020)

A strong health and societal benefit of sporting events

The study of the economic impact of Physical and Sports Activity on the company, the employee and civil society (CNOSF, MEDEF, & Goodwill management, 2015) highlights the value of regular physical and sports activity to **extend people's healthy lifespan, reduce health insurance costs and improve productivity in companies.**



Figure 4 Main benefits induced by the practice of at least one hour of running per week (CNOSF, MEDEF, & Goodwill management, 2015)

Sporting events are catalysts for the practice of sport, regardless of the participants' initial level of interest in the sport. The training programs promoted by the organizers and the sports communities encourage everyone to either turn to sports clubs or to organize outings with colleagues or with their entourage. This incentive toward sport practice usually lasts over several months up to the event ! The maintenance of events is therefore necessary in order to maintain this dynamic around running. Very much in vogue at the time of the confinement, how many press columns titled in the following months "Where have the Joggers gone"? The resumption and maintenance of events of reasonable density is therefore today a tremendous opportunity to maintain this weekly physical activity.



Figure 5. Recommended training time for the distance to run during the race

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	<p><u>Parkrun</u> is a British charity organization¹ which relies on a simple concept, free of charge : <i>turn up every Saturday and walk, jog or run 5k</i>. The organization founded in 2004 is now spread in 20 countries.</p>
	<p><u>SPEAR</u>, the Centre for Sport, Physical Education and Activity Research, conduct research in the spheres of sport, physical education, physical activity, leisure, events and heritage. The Centre's research is funded by a range of national and international funders including the International Olympic Committee, Department of Health, Department for Education, English Federation for Disability Sport, Mencap, Special Olympics GB, UK Sport, Sport England and the Youth Sport Trust.</p>
	<p>Since 2003, <u>Goodwill Management</u> has specialized in advising and accompanying companies towards more responsible models. The firm addresses the issues of responsible finance, circular economy, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for large groups, SMEs and Social Economy organizations.</p>

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¹Charity number: 1175062