NEWS RELEASE

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Healing effects of massage may be misplaced, Laurier professor finds

Waterloo, Ont. (May 26) -- The hope that over-worked athletes and their anxious fans put in the training room massage may be sadly misplaced, according to a professor of physical education at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont.

Peter Tiidus says massage does not affect muscle blood flow or speed recovery from intense exercise.

He will present his research findings at the annual conference of the American College of Sports Medicine in Minneapolis May 31 to June 4. The research, conducted with Laurier graduate Kevin Shoemaker, will be published in the *International Journal of Sports Medicine* later this year.

Tests done on male and female volunteers indicated that the flow of blood through the arteries and veins of muscles was unaffected by effleurage massage, which uses long strokes as a way to increase blood flow through muscles. As well, the rate of strength recovery following intense muscular exercise was unaffected by daily massage treatments for up to four days after exercise.

"Massage is used to care for athletes because people think it will speed recovery by improving blood circulation to the muscle," says Tiidus. "In fact, you just have to let the body heal itself. There is no way to speed the natural process."

He adds that this is just as true for the weekend athlete as it is for the elite.

Tiidus is chair of the department of physical education at Laurier. His research interests include exercise and injury, the effects of vitamin E and antioxidants on muscle damage, and nutrition and training.

His recent publications include "Do Estrogens Diminish Exercise-Induced Muscle Damage?" in the *Canadian Journal of Applied Physiology* and "Vitamin E Status and Exercise Training" in *Sports Medicine.*

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