

## REVIEW

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## “Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Science, Research and Culture” hosted by the University of Santiago, Chile (USACH)

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**Key words:** martial arts, combat sports, scientific, academic, cultural aspects

### Abstract

**Introduction.** Martial arts and combat sports are practiced by thousands of persons around the world and increasingly discussed in scientific publications.

**Material and Methods.** We describe an observational case study by describing and analyzing the activities of the “Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Science, Research and Culture” event hosted by the University of Santiago, Chile.

**Results.** Activities were organized by the School of Physical Activity, Sports and Health, August 16-19, 2016 and included six plenary conferences, six theoretical practical workshops, one Muay Thai clinic and the launch of the Combat Sports and Martial Arts Research Group. This was the first event of this type in Chile and had 370 participants.

**Conclusions.** In conclusion the objectives of the activities were accomplished because both science and cultural aspects of the sports were considered in an academic context. Among the participants were academics from several universities, students from physical activity-related majors, coaches, instructors and martial arts practitioners. The activities provided momentum for new challenges in 2017, including the organization of a martial arts and combat sports society and the first Chilean conference on martial arts and combat sports.

### Introduction

Martial arts and combat sports are practiced by thousands of people around the world and are increasingly the topics of scientific publications [Pérez-Gutiérrez *et*

*al.* 2015]. The number of publications might be related to sport performance [Valdés-Badilla, Pérez-Gutiérrez, Herrera-Valenzuela 2014], however; regrettably research in this subject has not always been easily accessible to trainers and athletes.

Various universities have workshops and presentations on some martial arts and/or combat sports and some even offer classes as electives for sports credit [Universidad de Santiago de Chile 2016a]. In addition, within majors related to physical activity, some universities require classes related to martial arts or combat sports [Universidad Santo Tomás 2016; Universidad de Santiago de Chile 2016b]. In addition, there are international scientific events related to martial arts and combat sports such as those organized by the *International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society* and the *Japanese Budo Academy*. In South America, Brazil organizes the National Conference on Martial Arts and Combat Sports. However, to our knowledge, there are no academic activities related to the development of applied sciences or cultural aspects as they relate to martial arts or combat sports available to university students, coaches, and athletes in Chile.

## Material and Methods

Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Science, Research and Culture event was organized over the course of four days: Tuesday, August 16 to Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The event was open to the public (university students, trainers, martial arts fans) and was free of charge.

## Results

### *Origin of “Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Science, Research and Culture”*

This activity was born from the subject of combat sports in the School of Science of Physical Activity, Sport and Health Sciences at USACH, which, in 2014, organized the ‘First Muay Thai Clinic’ in collaboration with the Royal Embassy of Thailand. For that clinic, teachers from Thailand were able to participate with the sponsorship of the culture department of the embassy in Chile. Later in 2015, a second clinic was organized in which the practice of techniques was added in a theoretical 15-minute class. The main objective was to describe Muay Thai as part of the cultural heritage of Thailand. In 2016, we organized the third Muay Thai clinic to be part of the activities of “Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Science, Research and Culture”.

### *Development*

“Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Science, Research and Culture” event was conducted over four days in August 2016.

Day 1. Plenary Conferences: On Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup> 6 plenary sessions were conducted in the Victor Jara hall of USACH with 160 people in attendance. Each conference consisted of 30-minute presentations and 10

minutes of questions from the audience. Five of the 6 sessions were conducted by faculty from the School of Science of Physical Activity, Sport and Health Sciences, USACH: Tomás Herrera-Valenzuela, PhD (Conference: Applied Physiology in Combat Sports); Celso Sánchez Ramírez, PhD (c) (Conference: The Foot and its Role in Combat Sports); Carolina Kürrüf Poblete Gálvez, PhD (Conference: Historical brief on *mapuche* combat practice); Rodrigo Soto Lagos, PhD (c) (Conference: Yield to beat: The concept of *DO* in martial arts and its application in everyday life); and Cristian Ferrada Méndez, MSc (Conference: Temporal structure in combat sports) and one session was conducted by an invited speaker, René Vergara Fuentes (Conference: Jump Tests in Combat Sports). Between the third and fourth sessions, Jules Guichou Leighton, MSc and students provided a 10-minute Aikido presentation.



Photo 1. Celso Sánchez -Ramírez, PhD (c)



Photo 2. Aikido exhibition, Sensei Jules Guichou Leighton (on left)

Tomás Herrera-Valenzuela, PhD also presented the launch of the Combat Sports and Martial Arts Research Group (GIDECAM), which is the first group of this type in Chile [GIDECAM 2016].

Day 2. Theoretical and practical workshops: On Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup> 6 theoretical and practical workshops were performed in the USACH gym with 80 people in attendance. The workshops were performed simultaneously in a circuit format, where the

audience was divided in groups rotating every 30 minutes between workshops. The workshops were conducted by USACH faculty; Tomás Herrera-Valenzuela, PhD (Specific Evaluations Applied to Combat Sports); Carolina Kürrüf Poblete Gálvez, PhD (Corporal *Mapuche* Combat Practices); Celso Sánchez Ramírez, PhD (c) (Foot anthropometry in combat sports); Rodrigo Soto Lagos,



**Photo 3.** (from left to right) Carolina Kürrüf Poblete Gálvez, PhD and Rodrigo Soto Lagos, PhD

PhD (c) (“Here and Now”: Initiation games to combat sports); Cristian Ferrada Méndez, MSc (Proprioception and Strength Exercise Applied to Combat Sports); Jules Guichou Leighton, MSc (Biomechanical Fundamentals Applied to Aikido).

Day 3. Muay Thai clinic: On Tuesday August 18<sup>th</sup> the third version of the Muay Thai clinic was conducted

at the USACH gym with 60 people in attendance. The activity began with a 15-minute presentation from the Cultural Attaché of the Royal Embassy of Thailand in Chile, Ms. Nilobol Pimdee, that connected Thai culture with Muay Thai. Then Master Thani Homchampa and Big Master Jarusdej Ulit, PhD (c) performed a 3-hour activity which included the teaching of Muay Thai traditions and the practice of the ceremonial dance called Wai Khru. It should be noted that Master Jarusdej Ulit thesis was about Wai Khru.

Day 4. Muay Thai clinic: On Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup> the third version of the Muay Thai clinic at USACH continued, with an attendance of 70 people. During the 3 hour workshop, Wai Khru practice continued and Muay Thai techniques were practiced. To end the activity, the Masters performed the *mongkhon* ceremony for the attendants. To end the day, the Director of the School of Science of Physical Activity, Sport and Health Sciences, USACH made closing remarks to conclude the activities of “Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Science, Research and Culture” and the Muay Thai clinic.

## Conclusion

In conclusion the objectives of “Martial Arts and Combat Sports: Science, Research and Culture” event were accomplished because both science and cultural aspects of the sports were considered in an academic context. Academics from several universities, students from physical activity-related majors, coaches, instructors and martial arts practitioners were among the event’s participants. The activities provided momentum for new challenges in 2017, including the organization of a martial arts and combat sports society and the first Chilean conference on martial arts and combat sports.



**Photo 4.** Master Jarusdej Ulit delivering *mongkhon* to the attendants



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## „Sztuki walki i sporty walki: Nauka, badania i kultura” na Uniwersytecie Santiago w Chile

**Słowa kluczowe:** sporty walki, sporty walki, aspekty naukowe, akademickie, kulturalne

### Abstrakt

Wstęp. Sztuki walki i sporty walki są uprawiane przez tysiące osób na całym świecie i coraz częściej omawiane w publikacjach naukowych.

Materiał i metody. Autorzy stworzyli obserwacyjne studium przypadku, opisując i analizując spotkanie zatytułowane: „Sztuki walki i sporty walki: Nauka, badania i kultura” organizowane przez University of Santiago, Chile.

Wyniki. Zajęcia zostały zorganizowane przez Szkołę Aktywności Fizycznej Sportu i Zdrowia, w dniach 16-19 sierpnia, 2016 roku. Obejmowały one sześć konferencji plenarnych, sześć warsztatów teoretyczno-praktycznych, konferencję dotyczącą Muay Thai i zapoczątkowanie zajęć grupy badawczej ds. sportów walki i sztuk walki. Było to pierwsze tego typu wydarzenie w Chile, które zgromadziło 370 uczestników.

Wnioski. Wyznaczone cele działania zostały zrealizowane, ponieważ zarówno naukowe i kulturowe aspekty sportu zostały zastosowane w kontekście akademickim. Uczestnikami byli pracownicy naukowcy z różnych uczelni, studenci kierunków związanych z kulturą fizyczną, trenerzy, instruktorzy i adepci sztuk walki. Ustalono nowe wyzwania na rok 2017, w tym stworzenie towarzystwa promującego sztuki walki i sporty walki oraz organizacja pierwszej chilijskiej konferencji na temat sztuk walki i sportów walki.