

## Editorial – Five Hugs

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During the recent Olympic Games in Tokyo South African swimmer Tatjana Schoenmaker won the 200m breaststroke event in a world record time. Immediately afterwards Annie Lazor and Lilly King, Americans who finished second and third, came from their lanes to wrap Schoenmaker in a celebratory hug, as did her South African teammate Kaylene Corbett. On exiting the pool Schoenmaker and Corbett remained in an embrace while walking the length of the pool, Schoenmaker weeping into her training partner's shoulder while contemplating the enormity of her accomplishment.

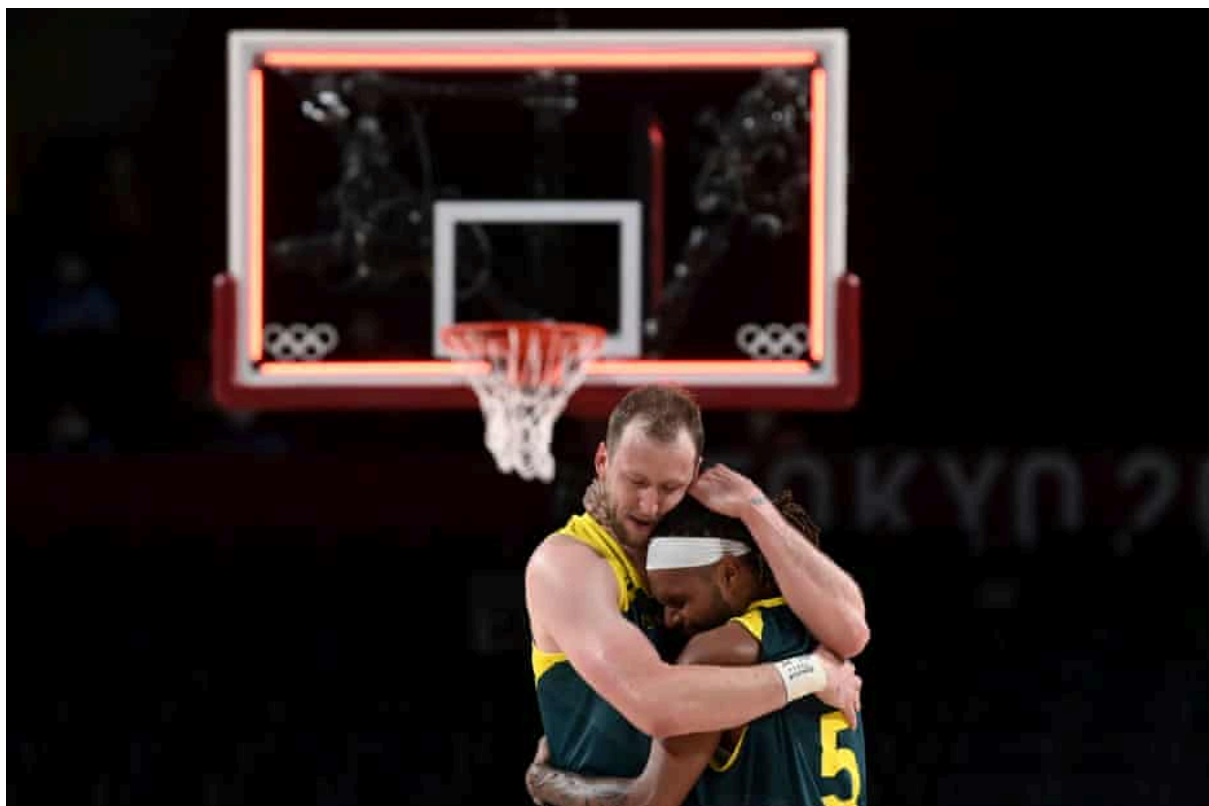
There were more hugs in the athletics. Italy's Gianmarco Tamberi and Mutaz Barshim of Qatar could not be separated in first place during the men's high jump, even after counting back previous jumps. On learning they could share the gold instead of conducting a jump-off Tamberi leapt in to his good friend Barshim's arms, both overcome with joy. Shortly afterwards Tamberi's Italian teammate Lamont Marcell Jacobs unexpectedly won the blue riband 100m sprint. Tamberi was waiting at the finish line to wrap Jacobs in another joyful hug. Several nights later two Australian athletes, Ash Moloney and Cedric Dubler, were competing in the final event of the decathlon, the 1500m. Moloney was in third place overall but needed to finish within ten seconds of his nearest rival to claim the bronze medal. Dubler had injured his hamstring in an earlier event, but ran the race anyway, pacing and encouraging a fatigued Moloney to ensure he won bronze. As Dubler limped across the finish line he celebrated every bit as much as Moloney did, the two sharing an exhausted but elated embrace on the track.

In the men's basketball Australia was competing in the bronze medal playoff. Again. At the previous Olympics they had lost the equivalent match by one point, continuing a pattern of coming close but never actually winning a medal. After defeating Slovenia and finally winning a bronze medal Australia's two best players Patty Mills and Joe Ingles, shared a momentous hug on the court. Despite earning many millions of dollars playing basketball in America, both players still greatly valued playing for Australia in international competition, and both had been a part of many of the previous difficult losses. Their embrace celebrated the immediate victory, but also served as a symbol of their shared hardship and endurance through adversity.

What does all this hugging have to do with Health Libraries in Australia? Probably nothing. Maybe the Olympic Games should not even have been held. Maybe sport is

a poor and confected prism through which to view other aspects of society. Maybe I'm just overly prone to sentiment and outbursts of emotion after my wife and I welcomed our first child into the world on 10 August. But as I held my son on the first night he was home, together watching Manchester United win a league game in a stadium full of fans for the first time since March 2020, I could only reflect on the ways in which these sporting hugs encapsulated something profound about our wider present moment. The shared humanity. The striving for excellence. The solace of colleagues. The social bonds. The simple need for a hug.

There is no denying the difficulties of the present moment. Hospitals and the health workforce are under tremendous pressure. Universities face great uncertainty. Lockdowns are wearing. Families and communities are stressed. Health misinformation and falsehoods continue to proliferate with frustrating alacrity. Maybe a hug is ill-advised in a pandemic of infectious disease, and maybe we can't all inspire by running faster and jumping higher and swimming stronger. But right now we all need support, reassurance, a sense of something shared, some striving for excellence, a little solace from colleagues. Perhaps the articles in this issue of JoHILA, laboured over by health library practitioners just like yourself, can provide some of this, a small strengthening of the social bonds we all need right now. A hug, of sorts, if you will.



Joe Ingles and Patty Mills embrace after the Boomers secured a bronze medal – Australia's first ever in a men's Olympic competition. Photograph: Aris Messinis/AFP/Getty Images