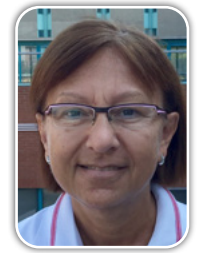


Sport, disability and social integration

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Abstract

Introduction: One of the most relevant disabilities is caused by Spinal Cord Injury (SCI). Typical causes of spinal cord damage are trauma, disease, or congenital disorders. In most cases SCI leads to paraplegia or quadriplegia. The purpose of this qualitative study was to evaluate the contribution of sporting activity to the individual rehabilitation project and to compare the personal experiences of professional wheelchair athletes(1-2).

Material and Methods: A total of nine individuals: four females and five males with SCI currently participating in wheelchair ski (2), wheelchair handbike (4), wheelchair archery (2), canoe (1) were recruited. Their ages ranged between 28 and 55. A handcycle is a type of vehicle powered by the arms rather than the legs, as on a bicycle. An informational interview is planned with the goal of gaining specific information and making better comparison. Questions concern: individual medical history, rehabilitation program, sport and athletic individual results, final considerations. For the assessment of strength (M.R.C. scale), five key muscles of the shoulder girdle were taken into consideration, which play the most delicate roles in “pedaling”.

Results: Thanks to handbike the athletes got a reinforcement of all the muscles of the upper limbs, with a significant improvement in strength of the triceps brachial; it also improved her cardiorespiratory condition. From the psychological point of view to begin this new sport has given them a concrete goal to follow. This new activity has allowed them to constantly improve and to meet new people who share them own difficulties and mostly the same passion.

Conclusions: The contribution of sport in rehabilitation program is important because it can be used as a tool to improve the body’s compromised motor functions. Emerging evidence indicates that exercise and sports can have significant physical and psychosocial health benefits for people with SCI.

Biography

Gabriella Fizzotti specialized in neurology working in Istituti clinic scientific Maugeri pavia Italy. He was recognition of the position of Assistant Coordinator within the Spinal Unit of the Maugeri Foundation of Pavia. In 1999 activated lecturer in Neurology at the School of Osteopathy based in Milan, Italy.



6th Global Conference on Physiotherapy, Physical Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine, October 23 -24, 2020

Citation: Gabriella Fizzotti, Sport, disability and social integration, Physiotherapy Congress 2020, 6th Global Conference on Physiotherapy, Physical Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine | October 23 -24, 2020, 05