

Abstract

Title: Barriers and facilitators of sport activities in adults with congenital physical disabilities: A Systematic Review

Background: Globally, there are over a billion individuals with disabilities in the world. Those individuals may have one or more physical attributes affected by their condition, restricting their access to sports, fitness activities, and physical tasks related to work or household activities. The lack of exercise poses a significant public health concern and may hinder undisputed benefits for physical and psychological of individual well-being.

Objectives: The main objective of this thesis was to systematically review available research sources on sport and physical activity participation among adults with congenital disabilities and to identify the barriers and facilitators for such individuals to participate in physical activities and para sport.

Methods: Four databases – Medline, PubMed, ERIC and Sportsdiscus were searched using terms: exercise; para sport, training, physical activity, continuous exercise, and the range of congenital disabilities. We employed a blend of MeSH terms specific to the database, free-form text, wildcard characters (employing '*' to truncate words), and Boolean operators ('AND', 'OR'). Only papers published from 2003 were included and the search was structured into three stages – evaluation of the title followed by an evaluation of the abstract and finally the evaluation of the full text. All retrieved papers were evaluated by MMAT, version 2018, and combined in a single database. The most recent search date was 26th November 2023.

Results: We identified a total number of 18 barriers and 15 facilitators across 15 included studies and articles. Critical barriers primarily centered around personal physical limitations and psychological barriers, including fear of judgment or lack of motivation. Environmental barriers included insufficient transport, lack of supportive infrastructure and limited access to suitable facilities.

Keywords: Sports participation, para sport, exercise, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida