

Article Title

Sailing as therapy: Adapted sailing on children with disabilities

Article Citation

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Adaptive Sport/Recreation Categories

- Adapted Sailing
- Recreation
- Sports/Physical Activity Performance

Study Type: Pre-post Interventional Study

Summary

After participating in an adapted sailing program, out of 14 children aged 5-18 years old with a diagnosis of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), cerebral palsy (CP), anxiety, and/or cancer, 42.9% of children reported an 80% increase in self-confidence in activities of daily life, while 35.7% of children reported 100% increase. 21.4% of children reported an increase in their positive outlook on life, while 50% of children reported a 100% increase. The study also found that the sailing program significantly improved a child's ability to get along with others, and also improved a child's functioning at school as per the Paediatric Quality of Life Inventory (PedsQL). When the adapted sailing program included at least 4 sessions of sailing, there was a significant increase in a child's grip strength as measured with a Jamar Dynamometer. Researchers also compared views of parents and vs. children on the child's quality of life before and after the sailing program and found that the children tended to be more positive in their outlooks compared to that of their parents when reporting results after the program.

Article Strengths

- Measured both physical functioning (ie. grip strength) and self-reported quality of life (PedsQL) after intervention.
- Accounted for the views of the child and the parent separately.
- Presented benefits of participating in adapted sailing program for children with disabilities.

Article Weaknesses

- Intervention protocol/program was not detailed.
- Small sample size.
 - Very limited generalizability.
 - Results not analyzed by diagnosis/impairment type.
- No concurrent control group.
- Study only performed over a short period of one summer, and did not follow long-term benefits.

- Not only study participants were enrolled in school during the summer months, so impact on school performance may not have been applicable to all participants at the time of the study.

Take Home Messages

- There are physical, mental, and social benefits for children with disabilities who participate in an adapted sailing program.
- There are differences between the views of children and their parents on the impacts of an adapted sailing program on the child's quality of life.

Impacts on Clinical Practice:

- Adapted sailing could be an effective intervention for children to improve physical and social skills.
- It is important to understand and acknowledge that the views of children and their parents may be different when it comes to their view of quality of life and outlook related to participation in adapted sailing, or perhaps even other activities.