Introduction

This study examined the impact of participation of able-bodied females in wheelchair women's wheelchair basketball team. This sport began in 1940, in many countries as an adaptation of typical basketball created by players "who after wartime injury, wanted to again experience the exhilaration of a highly athletic sport within a team environment" (International Wheelchair Basketball Federation [IWB], 2001).

The University of Illinois Adapted Varsity Athletics Program is the pioneer in providing these services to women with a physical impairment. One of its goals is to take wheelchair sports to the next level. Student-athletes in this program have the opportunity to be a part of cutting-edge wheelchair sport science as it applies to strength and conditioning, equipment development, and individual and team sport skill development.

Tim Nugent, former director of student rehabilitation at the University of Illinois, organized the first wheelchair basketball tournament in 1949 in Galesburg, Illinois. (DePauw and Gavron 2005)

Reverse Integration: Brasilie (1990) proposed what has been called reverse integration whereby people without disabilities are integrated into activities that previously were limited exclusively to people with disabilities.

Purpose

Blind and McClung (1997) described four ways that participation in individual sports impacted the physical self of men and women with physical disabilities as follows: (a) they experienced their bodies in new ways, (b) perceptions of their physical characteristics were improved, (c) participation redefined their physical capabilities, and (d) participation increased their confidence about participating in new physical activities. This research is intended to continue to explore an additional benefit of participation in wheelchair sport. Particularly, how participation in the women's wheelchair basketball team foster reverse inclusion.

Method

A literature review is defined by López de Prado (2002) as a process of accessing the most direct way possible all that has been published about the subject matter.

In the present study, to know how the participation of able-bodied women in women's wheelchair basketball foster reverse inclusion.

The references included: books, papers, articles, videos, magazines, and online resources. The key words utilized were: reverse inclusion and women's wheelchair.

Future research

It is important to conduct quality research related to women with and without disabilities in wheelchair basketball in order to understand the phenomenon of inclusion and reverse inclusion. Future research should make much use of qualitative methods, particularly individual interviews of women with and without disabilities as well as their coaches. Understanding their experiences may be the best way to begin solving the many challenges this community faces.

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Results

How does participation of able-bodied females in the women's wheelchair basketball team foster reverse inclusion?

Recently, Dr. Spencer-Cavaliere said that female wheelchair basketball athletes found the inclusion of able-bodied athletes on the team to have many different types of advantages. One participant commented on the irrelevance of disability in wheelchair basketball: "It makes me feel like I'm included in something, something that doesn't have separation in it." So it's something inclusionary in the fact that it doesn't matter whether you have a disability or not, you're there because you're an athlete and you love to play."

The common denominator in this sport is the use of a wheelchair. In general, females with and without disabilities are not looking primarily at the disability. They expect to have a good competitive game on the court. Practices and hard workouts are very similar among these women. For instance, women that walk have to learn how to use a wheelchair because they initially do not have control of it.

What are the benefits of participation in the Women's Wheelchair Basketball team that support reverse inclusion?"

The studies detailing sports for women with disabilities, in effect, do not emphasize or highlight reverse inclusion in wheelchair basketball. One of the benefits of participation in the Women's Wheelchair Basketball team that support inclusion was identified by Medland and Ellis-Hill (2008), "This may prove to be an appropriate source of education, heightening society's awareness that not only is sport important for able-bodied and disabled people but that reverse integration in wheelchair sports is taking place throughout the world."

What are the consequences of not encouraging reverse inclusion in women's wheelchair basketball?"

Research in this area is lacking. Armand, Thibout, Smith, and Labanowich (1992) stated that Brasilie's rationale for "reverse inclusion" is based upon faulty logic: moreover, it violates fundamental concepts that form the foundation of the wheelchair sport movement in the U.S. They noted not only would it reduce competitive opportunities for persons with disabilities, but reverse integration reflects an outdated perspective that wheelchair sports is primarily a form of rehabilitation rather than sport competition.

Conclusions

The twentieth century has made significant progress benefiting women with physical disabilities. The athletic world was no exception, since advances impacted the lives of many positively.

The majority of the females interviewed in the studies described in this literature review stated that they do not consider differences and disabilities. They are primarily concerned with having a good competition on the court.

In disability sport, reverse inclusion could play a key role in preventing prejudices, discrimination and social rejection. It is necessary that future research support this concept. Naturally schools, universities, and inclusive policies would work together to improve disability sports and consequently develop better lifestyles for society including people with and without disabilities.