

## Review

# The importance of sports for disabled children

Oktaý Kızar<sup>1</sup>, Mehmet Dalkılıç<sup>2\*</sup>, İzzet Uçan<sup>3</sup>, Hüdaverdi Mamak<sup>4</sup> and Şihmetmet Yiğit<sup>5</sup>

### Abstract

<sup>1</sup>Bingöl University, School of Physical Education and Sports, Bingöl

<sup>2</sup>Kilis December 7 University, School of Physical Education and Sports, Kilis

<sup>3</sup>Bayburt University, School of Physical Education and Sports, Bayburt

<sup>4</sup>Niğde University School of Physical Education and Sports, Niğde

<sup>5</sup>Namık Kemal University, School of Physical Education and Sports, Tekirdağ

\*Corresponding Author's E-mail:  
m.dalkilic@hotmail.com  
Telephone: +905325821375

Sport engrains in inner discipline, competitive spirit, and friendship, and there is no doubt that physical strength, endurance, social integration and psychological well-being increase with sports. Understanding the benefits of sports for disabled children cannot be difficult accordingly. The purpose of the present research is examining positive effects of sports on disabled children. The present research also includes the review of literature on sportive activities of disabled children. Sports contribute to the process of solving problems of social adaptation and loneliness among disabled children and individuals. Among the long-term objectives of activities for children who need special education are, developing positive sense of self, social competence, motor skills, physical and motor fitness, free-time skills, game skills, and creative expressions and eliminating anxiety. Now, private and official sports activities, competitions, and paralympics are organized at regular intervals in order to develop social adaptation, and reveal self-sufficiency abilities of disabled children. Use of sportive activities for rehabilitation and recreation of disabled children is now possible. Sport is becoming more common as a treatment complementary to conventional physical treatment methods. Work-out methods programmed in accordance with disability and age of disabled children can contribute to their social adaptation and psychological well-being.

**Keywords:** Disables, Sports, Children, Loneliness, Social cohesion

## INTRODUCTION

Many disabled children can experience personality disorders and disharmony more often than normal children as they cannot establish healthy communication. Sports support children to overcome their problems, by minimizing loneliness feelings and enable them maintain a meaningful living process. Sports enable individuals to get rid of their narrow worlds and be affected from other environments, individuals, beliefs and thoughts. With this aspect, sports contribute to establishing and reinforcing new friendships, and social cohesion. Therefore, disabled individuals, who are encouraged to sports, can be integrated to society faster, and prevented from being weary of life (Ölmez, 2010). Sport is one of the best methods utilized to socialize, develop belonging feeling, integrate to society, and overcome loneliness feelings of visually handicapped, like all other individuals (Öztürk et al., 2006; Sarı, 2007). All people are in need of establishing relationships, and interacting with others in

their lives. Lack of social relationships drives individuals to loneliness, and consequently they experience many other problems. Loneliness refers to the perception that social relationships don't work as expected. It is universal and a result of the feeling of belonging (Arkar et al., 2004). Loneliness is defined with different names according to its cause and symptoms (Buluş, 1997). Weiss theoretically classified loneliness as emotional and social, and stated that emotional loneliness was related to family, special friends, and relationships, while social loneliness was about friends in social environment (Demir, 1989).

As of birth, every individual is in interaction with other individuals around, interacts with parents, other members of the family, play mates, teachers, colleagues, and others. Some interactions provide us with important feedbacks about ourselves. Thus, the people around us have the ability to affect our sense of self positively or

negatively (Johnson et al., 2001). Even every individual has come to world with a physical structure working in a certain manner, the features of this physical structure are different. Since these differences include negativities, they are called as handicap. Therefore, while studying the concepts of self and self-respect, it should be taken into consideration that physical handicaps can affect the development of self (Enç et al., 2005).

The level of visibility of a handicap is also the indicator of how much it will receive attention from the society. The more visible a handicap is, the more likely it will deteriorate the regular flow of interaction. These types of people are certainly aware of others' negative attitudes towards themselves, and know that they will encounter prejudice and discrimination for all their lives (Richardson et al., 1961).

### **Classification of disabled children in accordance with their disabilities**

In order to express the physiological, psychological and anatomical deficiencies of individuals, some statements such as; disabled, handicapped, with special needs, limited are used. However, World Health Organization (WHO) offered a definition and classification that are based on sickness results and health aspect; and classified disabilities into three categories. Accordingly, impairment refers to lack or abnormality of physical structure and function in terms of health; handicap refers to the limitation in conducting an activity in the normal way; and disability is related with age, gender, social and cultural factors due to an impairment or handicap (Özürlüler Şurası, 1999; Koparan, 2003).

There are three main reasons for impairments of individuals who need special education. These are; prenatal reasons (inflammatory diseases, drug use, poor nutrition, radiation, use of some medicines during pregnancy), intranatal reasons (traumatic reasons and baby not getting oxygen because of the incompetency of the deliverer), and postnatal reasons (inflammatory diseases during early infancy, unconscious care, accidents, nutrition disorders, wars, drugs) (Özer, 2001).

### **Physical handicaps**

Perception handicaps (hearing, sight), handicaps due to cardio-vascular damages (Hereditary-Rheumatismal-Coronary Heart diseases), handicaps due to Central Nervous System damages (Cerebral Palsy- Athetoid-Ataxia- Tremor- Rigidity- Epilepsy), handicaps due to Musculoskeletal System damages (Os Good Schlatter-Arthritis- Posture Disorders).

### **Mental handicaps**

Mild Mental Retardation(50/55-70 IQ)  
Moderate Mental Retardation(5/40-50/55 IQ)  
Severe Mental Retardation(20/25-30-35 IQ)

### **Emotional handicaps**

Psychological and psychical handicaps

### **Learning handicaps**

Impairments in motor skills in writing and speaking of the language

### **Other handicaps**

Various health problems (Asthma, Diabetes, Obesity, Leucemia) (Gallahue,1987).

Special instruments, methods, and programs besides special teachers and institutions are required in order to meet developmental needs of handicapped individuals, provide them with educational services. These needs must be met thoroughly for handicapped individuals to participate in and adapt to life (Koparan, 2003). Considering the contributions of sport to handicapped individuals, it is very important for gaining self-sufficiency, social harmony due to its positive effects on life.

### **The importance of sports for disabled children**

Sports contribute to the process of solving problems of social adaptation and loneliness among disabled children and individuals. Among the long-term objectives of activities for children who need special education are, developing positive sense of self, social competence, motor skills, physical and motor fitness, free-time skills, game skills, and creative expressions and eliminating anxiety (Özsoy et al., 1988).

Sport programs should be developed specially considering the disabilities of children. While programming activities for disabled individuals, physical education should be provided in the first step, therapeutical physical education programs should be in the second step, and developing physical education programs should be in the last step (Gallahue,1987).

No matter what the disability, impairment and handicap of children and individuals who need special education are, every age and gender should be provided with the educational service as their fundamental right. Within this education, sports education is the most necessary and important educational method for disabled.

Sport enables individuals become self-sufficient, and maintains their lives this way, and gain social harmony (Gallahue,1987). Parent cooperation is of utmost importance in sports education of disabled children. Due to cooperation, a close bond is established between the educator and the family, and therefore, the family is also educated in this process. Sherril (1998) claimed that "developing physical and motor competence", self-development, social competence, and perceptual motor development should be primary objectives (Sherrill and Ruda, 1998).

Besides sports, games also have an important place in the educating of disabled children. Game skills are learning to play the games in the first step, then recognizing own and opponent's behaviours, and following the rules. Playing games, children can develop their creative thinking and creative potential, and recognize the world around them more easily, and this way become more interested, talkative, and friendly (Karen andGavron, 1995). Games played individually or in groups, contribute to muscle and bone development of disabled individuals, develop heart-lung function, increase speed, flexibility, endurance and coordination in dancing studies. Disabled individuals who cannot participate in physical activities regularly will have important loss in gaining movement and skills needed for normal growth and development. Physical inactivity among disabled individuals results in functional disorders such as obesity, cardiac diseases, attention deficit, reaction deficit, coordination disorders, and lack of strength (Leadership Training in Adapted Physical Education, Human Kinetics Books, 266-280, Illinois, 1998). Considering the positive effects, disabled children should participate in physical activities regularly. Sport types should be determined in accordance with the disabilities of individuals, and disabled children should be trained with expert educators, with the consultation of the physician of the disabled, and the participation of parents (Leadership Training in Adapted Physical Education, Human Kinetics Books, 266-280, Illinois,1998). Sport trainers, experts, and educators should be careful about parent participation and plan their programs in accordance with the disability, age and gender of the children. They should give long breaks between movement series, and make many repetitions for reinforcement of learning. Simple movement and games should be selected in the beginning. Trainers should use their gestures and mimes correctly, and select an activity time when the disabled individual is energetic. Additionally, disabled children should be encouraged for sports, and provided with constant, visual, verbal, and tactile stimulants (Gallahue,198; Koparan, 2003).

## CONCLUSION

Kielhofner and Miyake (1981) studied what behaviours

mentally handicapped individuals presented for struggle for life by playing various games in their research, and found a significant increase in motor behaviours, cognitive skills, attention, self-confidence, and social relationships. They compared mentally handicapped individuals who actively did sports and their peers who didn't, examined their socialization and in-family behaviours, and found that the ones who did sports exhibited more social behaviours. For this reason, in order to provide social adaptation of disabled individuals, accelerate this process, and contribute to their socialization; physical education and sport activities should be utilized as instruments, and the frequency of physical education and sports activities should be increased (Yazıcılar, 2004).

Page et al. (1994) studied the psycho-social disorder and exercise frequency among young individuals who used physical energy at various levels, and found that young individuals who didn't do frequent exercise experienced more loneliness, shyness and hopelessness than the ones who did (Yıldırım, 2010).

Yıldırım (2010) didn't find a significant relation between loneliness levels of athletes and doing sports (19). On the other hand, Yazıcılar (2004) found a significant relationship between loneliness levels and doing sports (Yıldırım, 2010).

Even the effect of sports on loneliness and hopelessness levels hasn't been detected certainly yet, sport is known to develop inter-personal relationships. Sport education is an effective educational instrument that eases social adaptation and develops interpersonal relationships (Tiryaki, 1996).

The present research will contribute to the literature by evaluating the important factors in sports among disabled children. Sport is becoming more common as a treatment complementary to conventional physical treatment methods. Work-out methods programmed in accordance with disability and age of disabled children can contribute to their social adaptation and psychological well-being. Doing sport or participation in sportive activities are considered to decrease loneliness levels of disabled children, so disabled children should be encouraged to participate in sportive activities more. Additionally, independent movement skills can be developed among disabled children through sports, so disabled children should participate in sportive activities more frequently. The deficiencies in materials should be made up for trainers to teach sports to disabled children accurately. Parents of disabled children also should be educated and learn correct behaviour model through training programs by expert family trainers. The need for sport facilities should be met to get every disabled child adopts sporting habits. Additionally, special sportive activities should be organized for disabled children at schools and national holidays in order to increase their adaptation to society and motivation.

## REFERENCES

- Arkar H, Sarı Ö, Fidaner H (2004). "Relationships between quality of life, perceived social support, social network and loneliness in a Turkish sample" *Yeni Symposium* 42(1):20-27., 2004.
- Buluş M (1997). Üniversite öğrencilerinde yalnızlık. Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fak. Derg 3:82-90
- Demir A (1989). UCLA yalnızlık ölçeğinin geçerlik ve güvenirliği. *Psikoloji Dergisi*, 7(23),14-28
- Enç M, Görme Özürlüleri, Gelişim, Uyum ve Eğitimleri, Ankara, Gündüz Eğitim ve Yayıncılık (2005).
- Gallahue D (1987). Developmental Physical Education For Today's Elementary School Children, 8-9
- Johnson. II. Durell: Lavoie. Joseph C. And Mahoney. Molly (2001). "Interparental Conflict and Family Cohesion: Predictors of Loneliness, Social Anxiety. Social Avoidance in Late Adolescence". *J. Adolescent Research*.16(3): 304-319.,.
- Kalyoncu A (1997). Özürlülerde Spor, Kitap Evi, Ankara
- Karen P, Gavron J (1995). Disability and Sport, Usa,
- Koparan Ş (2003). Özel ihtiyaçları Olan Çocuklarda Spor, Uludağ Üniv., Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, Cilt:XVII, Sayı:1,
- Leadership Training in Adapted Physical Education, Human Kinetics Books, 266-280, Illinois (1998).
- Ölmez E (2010). Görme Engelli Bireylerin Sosyalleşme Sürecine Sporun Etkisi. Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi. Gazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.,.
- Özer DS (2001). Engelliler için Beden Eğitimi ve Spor, Nobel yayın Evi, Ankara.
- Özsoy Y, Özyürek M, ark (1988). Özel Eğitime Giriş, Çağ Matbası, Ankara
- Öztürk H, Nazik SF, Yaman SÇ (2006), Öğrencilerde Yalnızlık ve Sosyal Destekle Bunlara Etki Eden Faktörlerin İncelenmesi. *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* Cilt: 16, Sayı: 1 Sayfa: 383-394.,.
- Richardson SA, Goodman N, Hastorf A, ve Dornbusch S (1961). "cultural uniformity in reaction to physical disabilities.", *American sociological Review*, No:26, ss. 241- 247
- Özürlüler Şurası Ön Komisyon Raporları, Ankara, 1999.
- Sarı E (2007). Selçuk Üniversitesinde Öğrenim Gören Bedensel Engelli ve Görme Engelli Öğrencilerin Karşılaştıkları Sorunlar ve Çözümüne Yönelik Çağdaş Öneriler.,.
- Sherrill C, Ruda L (1998). Leisure Interest and Practicise of Mentally retarded Adults, *Parks and Recreations*, 12 (11), 30-33,
- Tiryaki S (1996). Spor Yapan Bireylerin Saldırganlık Düzeylerinin Belirlenmesi (Takım ve Bireysel Sporlar Açısından Bir İnceleme). Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Mersin Üniversitesi. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Yazıcılar İ (2004). Spor Yapan ve Spor Yapmayan Gençlerin Yalnızlık Düzeylerinin Araştırılması Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Yüksek Lisans Tezi.
- Yıldırım Y (2010). Çokluk F., Yatılı İlköğretim Bölge Okulu 6. 7. ve 8. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Spor Yapma Durumlarına Göre Yalnızlık ve Umutsuzluk Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi *Sportmetre Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, Cilt: VIII, Sayı:3.