

**ADAPTED SPORTS AND MENTAL HEALTH: PROMOTING QUALITY OF LIFE
THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCES**

**ESPORTE ADAPTADO E SAÚDE MENTAL: PROMOVENDO A QUALIDADE DE
VIDA A PARTIR DE EXPERIÊNCIAS VIVIDAS**

**DEPORTE ADAPTADO Y SALUD MENTAL: PROMOVRIENDO LA CALIDAD DE VIDA
A TRAVÉS DE EXPERIENCIAS VIVIDAS**



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ABSTRACT: The study addresses the intersection of adapted sports, specifically adapted football for para-athletes, and mental health. The objective is to report the experience of physical education professionals in mental health for para-athletes, aiming to manage pre-competition anxiety effectively. The research adopts a qualitative approach through an experiential account within the context of descriptive research. The results revealed that adapted sports go beyond mere physical activity, taking on the role of an agent of social transformation and promoting the empowerment of individuals with disabilities. However, it was acknowledged that para-athletes face challenges, notably pre-competition anxiety, which can negatively impact their mental well-being. In light of this realization, mental health training emerges as a strategy to assist para-athletes in anxiety management, contributing to enhancing their performance. Additionally, it was observed that this training not only benefits individuals but can also positively impact teams as a whole.

KEYWORDS: Adapted Sports. Mental Health. Adapted soccer for Para-athletes.

RESUMO: O estudo aborda a interseção entre o esporte adaptado, mais especificamente o futebol adaptado para paratletas, e a saúde mental. O objetivo é relatar a experiência de profissionais de Educação Física em saúde mental para paratletas, visando efetivar o controle da ansiedade pré-competição. A pesquisa adota uma abordagem qualitativa por meio de um relato de experiência inserido no contexto da pesquisa descritiva. Os resultados revelaram que o esporte adaptado transcende a mera atividade física, assumindo o papel de agente de transformação social e promovendo o empoderamento de pessoas com deficiência. No entanto, reconheceu-se que os paratletas enfrentam desafios, notadamente a ansiedade pré-competição, que pode impactar negativamente seu bem-estar mental. Diante dessa constatação, a formação em saúde mental surge como uma estratégia para auxiliar os paratletas na gestão da ansiedade, contribuindo para o aprimoramento de seu desempenho. Além disso, observou-se que essa formação não beneficia apenas os indivíduos, mas também pode ter um impacto positivo nas equipes como um todo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Esporte Adaptado. Saúde Mental. Futebol adaptado para Paratletas.

RESUMEN: El estudio se centra en la intersección entre el deporte adaptado, específicamente el fútbol adaptado para paratletas, y la salud mental. Su objetivo es relatar la experiencia de profesionales de Educación Física en salud mental para paratletas para gestionar eficazmente la ansiedad previa a la competición. A través de un relato de experiencia, basado en una investigación descriptiva con enfoque cualitativo, los resultados revelaron que el deporte adaptado es mucho más que una actividad física; es un agente de transformación social capaz de empoderar a personas con discapacidad. Sin embargo, se reconoció que los paratletas también enfrentan desafíos, como la ansiedad previa a la competición, que puede afectar negativamente su bienestar mental. En este contexto, la formación en salud mental surge como una estrategia para ayudar a los paratletas a enfrentar la ansiedad y mejorar su rendimiento. Además, se observó que esta formación no beneficia solo a los individuos, sino que también puede tener un impacto positivo en los equipos en su conjunto.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Deporte Adaptado. Salud Mental. Fútbol adaptado para Paratletas.

Introduction

The pursuit of complete health, as defined by the World Health Organization, encompasses physical well-being and mental and social balance. In this context, health promotion becomes a broader concept than the mere absence of diseases. It considers a series of determining factors, ranging from nutrition, housing, sanitation, work, education, a healthy physical environment, social support, responsible lifestyle, and healthcare, among other factors that influence an individual's well-being (BUSS, 2003).

Sport plays a significant role in the lives of people with disabilities, going beyond mere rehabilitation. One of the objectives of sports, as highlighted by Braga *et al.* (2002), is to provide leisure and elevate the self-concept of these individuals. Therefore, adapted sports assume a crucial position in society, contributing to combating prejudice and stereotypes associated with people with disabilities (HEIL, 2008).

The field of adapted sports is a relatively new area that requires expanding specialized knowledge. Despite the growing interest in monitoring psychological changes in athletes, there is a shortage of studies in the investigated literature addressing the relationship between stress, motivation, and anxiety in players with physical disabilities and their implications for sports practice (FERREIRA; DIETRICH; PEDRO, 2015).

In this context, the construction of the adapted sports field can be enriched by considering various variables, such as the distribution of practitioners based on their position in the social context, the diversity of involved sports federations, the number of athletes, the individual characteristics of each type of disability, and the importance of the initial contact with sports. Authors like Paiva and Carlesso (2019) emphasized the need to explore more deeply the psychological aspect of athletes with physical disabilities, particularly concerning factors such as stress, motivation, and anxiety. These aspects play a critical role in the sports experience of these athletes and can directly influence their performance and satisfaction in adapted sports.

Tweed and Howe (2011) assert that the increasing interest in Paralympic sports is attributed to three main reasons: the effectiveness of sports in the rehabilitation process, the right of people with disabilities to engage in sports, and the nature of the sport as a form of entertainment. Mental health and inclusion in sports are two interconnected issues that play a significant role in people's well-being and the promotion of equality.

As awareness of mental health grows, sports also begin to recognize its importance and challenge stigmas associated with mental health issues. Furthermore, inclusion in sports means

ensuring that everyone, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or mental health conditions, has the opportunity to participate in and benefit from sports engagement (NEVES; MARTINS, 2022).

Within this landscape, mental health emerges as a crucial element in human development, influencing physical, environmental, social, political, psychological, and other aspects of daily life (SEQUEIRA *et al.*, 2014).

Mental health in good condition is essential for effective performance in all areas, including sports. However, one of the most pressing challenges athletes face is pre-competition anxiety. The promotion of mental health in adaptive sports is of vital importance, as athletes with disabilities face unique challenges that can affect their psychological well-being. Considering the presented context, the central question of this study emerges: can mental health training for adapted football athletes contribute to controlling pre-competition anxiety and, consequently, improve participants' performance during competitions?

The relationship between mental health and sports is complex. Sports can be a powerful tool to enhance mental health, as regular physical activity releases endorphins, reduces stress, and promotes overall well-being. Additionally, sports provide opportunities for socialization and building self-esteem, which is particularly important for those facing mental health challenges.

However, intense pressure, unrealistic expectations, and excessive competitiveness in sports can impair athletes' mental health, leading to disorders such as depression and anxiety. Thus, the goal is to report the experience of physical education professionals in mental health for adapted athletes to control pre-competition anxiety effectively.

Methodology

This study constitutes descriptive research with a qualitative approach, focusing on experiences related to parasports. With a duration of three months, the implementation period extended from January to March 2023. The scope of the research encompassed Physical Education professionals, along with teachers from various fields. The recording of experiences was carried out through a field diary designed for note-taking of observations.

Mussi, Flores and Almeida (2021) state that the experience report as a modality of academic writing contributes to improving scientific and professional actions. These authors

point out that experience should be the starting point for learning, as the experience report enables the critical analysis of scientific and professional practices and interventions.

To enhance the conduction of this study in a more focused manner, a literature review was conducted, consulting academic databases, including Scielo and CAPES Periodicals Portal. The selection of relevant articles followed specific criteria, such as the availability of complete articles in Portuguese and the exclusion of articles in foreign languages, repeated articles, those not accessible in full text, reviews, conference proceedings, editorials, and articles not directly related to the adapted sports theme. After this screening, eight complete studies remained for analysis.

The experiences narrated here were conducted in a Paralympic Sports Association, starting in the second academic term and extending until the last term. The activities carried out proved to be a rich source of learning for both the involved professionals and the participants benefiting from the initiative. This practice significantly contributed to developing interpersonal skills, such as communication and empathy, while fostering a more welcoming environment for exchanging ideas and clarifying doubts, as highlighted by Chioquetta *et al.* (2009).

Given the nature of the practices involved and the sensitivity of the relationship established with the participants, it was understood that submitting these activities to a Research Ethics Committee would not be necessary. This is because the ethical principles outlined in resolutions 466/2012 and 510/2016 were fully incorporated throughout the entire experiential process and the resulting descriptive manuscript, with all results derived from the researchers' observations. Additionally, absolute confidentiality regarding the identification of para-athletes and all participants and institutions involved was rigorously observed (BRASIL, 2012, 2016).

It is important to note that the participants in this study were invited to join the research by the principal researcher after obtaining the institution's proper authorization through a Letter of Agreement. Furthermore, they were requested to sign an Informed Consent Form (ICF).

It is worth noting that the institution responsible for developing the activities described here consented to their realization. These activities were constantly supervised during the sessions, with the presence of the teacher responsible for the discipline and her team. This ethical care and close collaboration with the institution ensured the protection and dignity of the participants, as well as the reliability of the results obtained during this experience.

Results and Discussions

This study originated from an experience conducted by Physical Education professionals in an association, as presented here, in Fortaleza (CE), which offered swimming classes to the community. During this period, students with disabilities affiliated with a parasports association participated in the classes, providing the first contact with adapted sports and athletes with disabilities.

As the academic experience progressed, interest in the professional intervention area, especially with the audience of people with disabilities in the school environment, grew. Entry into the project on a voluntary basis as the coach for the parasports discipline and later as coordinator demonstrated dedication and increasing involvement with the parasports movement.

This involvement led to the conception of a more comprehensive project focused on adapted and high-performance sports in the state of Ceará. The goal is to bring People with Disabilities (PwD), or not, together in sports practice, contributing to the development of parasports in line with social actions.

A *Associação D'eficiência Superando Limites (ADESUL)*⁵ was founded to promote the inclusion of People with Disabilities of all ages, genders, and social classes in sports activities. Additionally, it seeks to stimulate the participation of these individuals in Social Assistance policies through initiatives of integration with the community and promotion of PwDs' protagonism. The focus of ADESUL is to enhance the quality of life for PwDs, with emphasis on cultural, professional, and educational development, aiming for integration into the job market and contributing to their civic education.

Within the scope of the twenty modalities offered by the project, ADESUL provides classes at least twice a week, at previously established times, covering all three possible shifts: morning, afternoon, and evening.

In addition to the specific training for each modality, ADESUL develops recreational activities to improve coordination, balance, laterality, socialization, and strength and muscle relaxation exercises. The project offers support from a multifunctional team composed of professionals such as physiotherapists, nutritionists, and doctors specialized in sports medicine.

⁵ It is an organization that promotes inclusion and equal opportunities for people with disabilities. They provide support, guidance, and resources for individuals with disabilities, aiming to improve their quality of life and raise awareness about disability-related issues. Through programs, events, and advocacy, the association seeks to overcome barriers and challenges faced by people with disabilities, aiming for a more inclusive and accessible society for everyone.

The trajectory of ADESUL represents a practical approach to promoting the inclusion of People with Disabilities (PwDs) through adapted and high-performance sports. Initiated in 2015 with only ten founding members, including a teacher, athletes, and family members in administrative roles, the project began with two modalities: paraswimming and parathletics. Initially, the training took place in environments suitable for initiating parasport but not conducive to high-performance practice, prompting the search for partnerships to ensure training locations more suitable for the athletes' development.

With the establishment of partnerships, the project gained visibility and attracted memberships from both athletes and professionals, especially on a voluntary basis. This growth allowed the natural and organic expansion into new modalities, always aligned with the guidelines of their respective national entities.

Over eight years of operation, ADESUL experienced significant growth, evolving from its initial ten founding members to the current more than 600 participants, including athletes, coaches, and administrative staff. The project, which started its activities in locations less suitable for high-performance sports development, now has dozens of partnerships (public and private, non-profit) that provide the best training structures in the state for the associated athletes. Additionally, it has a complete multidisciplinary technical team, including 19 coaches (Physical Education professionals), 14 Physical Education interns, two physiotherapists, and two sign language interpreters.

The *Associação D'eficiência Superando Limites* offers, in 2023, a total of 18 parasports modalities, which are: Wheelchair Basketball; Paralympic Boccia; Adapted Fencing; Amputee Soccer; Blind Soccer; Cerebral Palsy Soccer; Deaf Futsal; Intellectual Disability Futsal; Goalball; Wheelchair Handball; Blind Judo; Parabadminton; Paracanoeing; Paraswimming; Parathletics; Power Soccer; Sitting Volleyball; and Adapted Chess.

The parasports and social activities of the organization result in approximately 1,000 total monthly attendances, held from Monday to Saturday, covering locations such as Fortaleza, *Aquiraz*, *Maracanaú*, *Maranguape*, and *Pacatuba* directly. Additionally, there is an indirect impact on regions such as *Eusébio*, *Pacajus*, *Horizonte*, *Chorozinho*, *Itapajé*, *Aracati*, and *Várzea Alegre*.

Guttman (2004) observed that sports often involve meticulous quantification of athletic performance. However, in the context of ADESUL, this metric is used to assess progress and success in including People with Disabilities (PwDs). Since its foundation in 2015, ADESUL

has been dedicated to the mission of facilitating the inclusion of PwDs in sports practice, as well as in social assistance and personal development initiatives.

In 2023, ADESUL will offer 18 parasports modalities, covering a wide range of interests and needs of People with Disabilities (PwDs), with activities extending across various cities. However, in the professional and academic intervention scope, it is relevant to highlight some challenges faced for the project's development, such as the scarcity of specific academic training in parasports. This is due to the limited availability of content focused on adapted Physical Education and the absence of disciplines dedicated to adapted sports for People with Disabilities.

The activities conducted by ADESUL included interventions in the aquatic environment, emphasizing the development of motor skills and social interaction as key elements of the project. This experiential report, based on descriptive research with a qualitative approach, not only reaffirms the effectiveness of aquatic activities in promoting the development of motor skills and physical fitness components in people with disabilities, as discussed in previous studies (FRAGALA-PINKHAM; HALEY; O'NEIL, 2008; SOUZA; CHAVES, 2015; MAYER *et al.*, 2019), but also highlights the importance of proper planning to address different audiences.

The adopted approach aimed to provide enjoyment and challenges to participants, considering their diverse needs. According to Mayer *et al.* (2019), it is crucial that planning for people with disabilities incorporates appropriate content and strategies, encouraging adherence through enjoyment in activities. This study recognized the need for adjustments in objectives and methods, such as emphasizing repeated demonstration instead of verbal explanations, to meet individual needs.

The participation of parents in classes was emphasized as a fundamental element to strengthen the bonds between parents and children, contributing to the mental health of para-athletes in facing pre-competition anxiety.

As proposed by Fabiani, Scaglia, and Almeida (2016), engaging in playful activities stimulates the development of skills and motivates the use of already acquired skills, always respecting individual time and possibilities.

The varied activities positively influenced physical aspects, such as balance and coordination, and also stimulated participation in psychosocial aspects, contributing to the mental health of para-athletes and the control of pre-competition anxiety. This experiential

report highlights the importance of inclusion in diverse motor activity programs to promote richer and more complex learning for participants.

The activities developed at ADESUL provided an understanding of professional involvement in the field of adapted sports and enriched the training of the professionals involved. They promoted the mental health of para-athletes and contributed to the control of pre-competition anxiety by expanding possibilities and providing unique experiences. The challenge was overcome through daily practice, which involved seeking faculty training from national entities responsible for the development of Paralympic and Parasports modalities in Brazil. Additionally, strategies were adopted by reading articles and publications, including international materials, and encouraging the production of content specific to the field.

ADESUL has also stood out in the organization of sporting events, ranging from local competitions to national and international championships, such as the Fortaleza 2023 World Boccia Cup. These events highlight the excellence of adapted sports and underscore the Association's ability to gain national and international recognition.

Additionally, ADESUL has implemented innovative programs, such as the “*Atleta Trabalhador* (Athlete Worker)” and “*Atleta Nota 10* (Athlete Top 10)”, to empower and comprehensively integrate people with disabilities into society. Initiatives like the “*Programa de Empregabilidade* (Employability Program)” and additional partnerships reflect the Association's commitment to its members' holistic development and full integration into society.

ADESUL's philosophy, centered on individual potential rather than limitations, is evident in its commitment to assisting each athlete and member in reaching their maximum potential, promoting health, and fostering social transformation.

Adapted sports play a significant role in the lives of people with disabilities, extending beyond mere rehabilitation. One of the goals of sports is to provide leisure and elevate the self-concept of these individuals. Therefore, adapted sports assume a crucial position in society, contributing to combating prejudice and stereotypes associated with people with disabilities, as emphasized by Heil (2008).

In this context, the construction of the adapted sports field can be enriched by considering various variables, such as the distribution of practitioners based on their position in the social context, the diversity of involved sports federations, the number of athletes, the individual characteristics of each type of disability, and the importance of the initial contact with sports.

Authors like Araujo *et al.* (2013) have emphasized the need to explore the psychological aspect of athletes with physical disabilities, particularly regarding factors such as stress, motivation, and anxiety. According to Tweed and Howe (2011), the increased interest in Paralympic sports is attributed to three main reasons: the effectiveness of sports in the rehabilitation process, the right of people with disabilities to engage in sports, and the character of the sport as a form of entertainment.

The definition of health itself has evolved over time, influenced by culture and historical context. Health promotion involves preventive measures, including engaging in physical activity. As stated by Green and Kreuter (1991), regular physical activity improves physical fitness and contributes to mental and social health, making it a fundamental component in the pursuit of comprehensive physical, mental, and social well-being.

Authors such as Scliar (2007) argue that health reflects social and individual contexts, emphasizing the importance of considering the complexity of the human being in health approaches.

Sport Psychology (PsE) plays a crucial role in promoting performance and personal satisfaction, especially for people with disabilities, as this area aims to investigate how sports practice offers physical and psychological benefits, thus promoting self-esteem, social integration, and well-being for those who participate (MELO; LÓPEZ, 2002).

According to Oliveira and Parana (2021), psychological training in adapted sports aims to modify psychic processes by adapting strategies from conventional sports psychology to meet the needs of athletes with disabilities, promoting self-confidence, anxiety management, motivation, and resilience. These elements are essential for the complete development and overcoming challenges athletes face.

Inclusion in sports is conceived as ensuring equal access to sports involvement for everyone, regardless of abilities, disabilities, or mental and social health conditions. The promotion of inclusion in sports requires the creation of welcoming and respectful environments for all individuals. This involves adapting sports facilities and providing appropriate training for individuals with disabilities. According to Araujo *et al.* (2013), there is a significant increase in the participation of people with disabilities in sports activities and competitions. However, it is crucial to analyze how this participation unfolds and its impact within the competitive context, not limited to sports performance but also to its influence on human development.

Promoting mental health in adapted sports plays a crucial role for athletes facing unique challenges. Authors like Oliveira and Parana (2021) emphasize the importance of adapting psychological support strategies to address issues such as anxiety, self-esteem, and acceptance of disability.

When sports focus on high performance and effectiveness, turning into a spectacle, they can be commercialized, generating normative pressure on bodies. Guttmann (2004) points out that bodies are meticulously quantified mathematically in their sports performances.

By integrating the promotion of mental health in adapted sports, an inclusive environment can be created where athletes with disabilities feel respected, supported, and empowered to achieve their sports goals while taking care of their mental health. This enhances the athletes' quality of life and contributes to a more inclusive society aware of mental and physical health issues.

For Gomes and Cruz (2001), achieving high levels of performance, whether in sports by athletes or various activities, is associated with robust motivation and commitment to sports. This involves valuing and having a primary interest in individual performance, formulating clear and specific goals for competitions, high self-confidence, concentration ability, frequent use of imagination and mental visualization, the ability to control anxiety and activation levels, the development and application of competitive mental plans and routines, and effective ability to deal with unexpected events and distractions.

According to Nahas (2006), regular practice of physical and sports activities can contribute to reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, promoting social interaction, and elevating overall well-being in individuals with disabilities.

Anxiety represents a significant concern in various areas of life, including adapted sports. Athletes with disabilities, already facing unique challenges, may also deal with anxiety triggered by various reasons. Addressing anxiety in adapted sports requires a sensitive and comprehensive approach. The level of competitive stress can impact the athlete's performance, with excessively high levels of anxiety inhibiting athletic performance. Athletes have reported below-expected results due to excessive anxiety about sports events. High levels of anxiety can distort external perceptions of the athlete, leading to inappropriate reactions at crucial moments (CEVADA *et al.*, 2012).

Pre-competition anxiety can have a significant impact on sports performance, and its management becomes crucial. It is essential for athletes to identify and use relaxation and

breathing techniques and to maintain a sense of humor to combat them (RUBIO, 2002; FABIANI, 2009).

The integration of anxiety in adapted sports is crucial to ensure that athletes with disabilities have access to the necessary support to face this specific challenge. In a study conducted by Kolayis (2012) examining the self-esteem of 124 wheelchair basketball players and its impact on anxiety levels, the results indicated that motivation and self-esteem play a significant role in predicting anxiety among these players. Establishing a supportive and understanding environment around mental health in adapted sports contributes to a more positive and beneficial sports experience for all involved.

Athletes with disabilities participating in adapted sports may face a variety of challenges, including anxiety issues unique to their circumstances. A study conducted by Silva *et al.* (2012) with 27 Paralympic track and field athletes of both genders revealed that 72% of the participants showed increased levels of anxiety, consequently impacting the sleep quality of these athletes. The integration of an anxiety approach and the specific difficulties of adapted sports in sports practices is essential to ensure that all athletes, regardless of their disabilities, have the opportunity to enjoy sports and face their challenges in a healthy and supported manner.

It is essential to recognize anxiety as a significant element in adapted sports and provide opportunities how to address this issue effectively. Understanding anxiety in adapted sports is crucial to ensure that athletes with disabilities have access to the necessary support to face this specific challenge and fully enjoy their sports experiences.

The integration of thought enhances the understanding of the benefits of physical activity for mental health and cognitive processing, as Ratey and Hagerman (2012) emphasize the positive influence of exercise on brain function and mental health. Their research suggests that regular physical activity stimulates the growth of new neurons, improves brain function, and contributes to reducing stress and anxiety. Therefore, considering the impact of physical activity on mental health, the findings support the idea that participation in physical exercise programs benefits the physical and psychological aspects.

Mental health education can provide valuable tools for Paralympians to apply in their routine, training, and competitions, which can positively impact individual and collective team outcomes.

In conclusion, promoting inclusion through adapted sports plays a crucial role in building a more inclusive and equitable future, in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Final considerations

The relationship between mental health, adapted sports, and inclusion is intricate and of vital importance. Promoting mental health in adapted sports is not only a benevolent measure but a necessity to create an environment where athletes with disabilities can thrive. The integration of psychological support strategies and adapted training is crucial to address specific challenges such as anxiety, self-esteem, and acceptance of disability.

Furthermore, promoting inclusion in adapted sports is a matter of justice and equality. Everyone, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or mental health conditions, should have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from sports involvement. This not only enhances the quality of life for individuals with disabilities but also contributes to a more inclusive society that is aware of mental health issues.

Thus, by addressing mental health and inclusion in adapted sports, we improve the athletes' quality of life and contribute to building a more equal world. In this context, we provide everyone with the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy the benefits provided by sports. Mental health and inclusion in sports are interconnected issues that play a fundamental role in people's well-being and in promoting equality. It is our responsibility as a society to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate and thrive in the world of sports, regardless of their circumstances.

This study aimed to explore the relationship between mental health and performance in adapted sports, providing Paralympians with insights into coping with pre-competition anxiety. Promoting mental health in this context can enhance participants' quality of life, encompassing social, mental, emotional, and physical aspects, aligning with global visions of health and well-being.

As evident from the reported experience, adapted sports prove to be a powerful force for human development and inclusion. This investigation clearly demonstrated that adapted sports are more than physical activity; they are instruments of social transformation and sources of empowerment for individuals with disabilities. This transformation extends far beyond the

development of sports skills, encompassing essential aspects of life such as self-esteem, autonomy, socialization, and overcoming challenges.

However, the scenario is not without obstacles. The conducted analysis recognized the critical importance of mental health, a facet that cannot be underestimated. While adapted sports provide various rewards, they can also trigger anxiety and stress in Paralympians, testing their emotional well-being. Pre-competition anxiety emerges as an unavoidable reality that demands attention.

In the face of these challenges, mental health education has proven valuable and timely. It equips Paralympians with the necessary tools to deal with anxiety and enhance their performance in training and competitions. The conducted research indicates that this education not only benefits individuals but can also positively impact the collective outcomes of their teams.

Considering the evolution of health perspectives, from the WHO definition that conceives "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being" to the current emphasis on social determinants of health, this research aligns with the holistic concept of health promotion. The study presents evidence of how adapted sports play a significant role in fostering the physical, mental, and social well-being of individuals with disabilities.

In conclusion, this research is expected to serve as a call to action. It is hoped that sports, educational, and governmental institutions recognize the importance of investing in the mental health of Paralympians, thereby contributing to the construction of a more inclusive and equitable world.

This study is believed to significantly contribute to the field of adapted sports and mental health. However, the work is ongoing, and there are opportunities for future research to delve deeper into the issues addressed in this study, seeking to further enhance strategies supporting the mental health of Paralympians.

By transcending the boundaries between physical capacity and mental health, this study can serve as a benchmark in the continuous journey toward a more inclusive society. In this perspective, the aim is the recognition, appreciation, and celebration of the potential of each individual, regardless of their abilities or challenges.

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