



Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association

A demand for sports and recreation camps:
findings and conclusions



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Executive Summary

Between September 2017 and November 2017, CPISRA (Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association) conducted an online questionnaire study on the demand for sports and recreation camps for individuals with Cerebral Palsy and with similar neurological conditions. The questionnaire study was also designed to examine participation rates, the benefits of sports and recreation for individuals with Cerebral Palsy and similar neurological conditions, as well as what individuals would gain from having an opportunity to go to a sports and / or recreation camp. This report aims to present the findings of the questionnaire study, what the findings mean as well as make recommendations for delivering sports and recreation camps which are inclusive for individuals with Cerebral Palsy and with similar neurological conditions.



In total, 150 people participated within the study worldwide. The findings show that whilst some individuals with Cerebral Palsy or with a similar neurological condition do participate in sports and recreation, only 20% of individuals were currently participating in sport and only 50% were currently participating in recreational activities. Likewise, when the data revealed that individuals would try different activities if they were given the opportunity, this suggested that there would be a higher rate of sports and recreation participation amongst individuals with Cerebral Palsy and similar neurological conditions if more opportunities were made available. As a result, this highlights that currently there are not enough opportunities for individuals to participate in sports and recreation, and that individuals need to have more sports and recreation opportunities. It can be said that opportunities such as sports and recreational camps are important in increasing participation rates as they can provide a structured and instructor-led range of activities, which can introduce individuals to different sports and recreational activities. The research also revealed that by giving individuals with Cerebral Palsy and with similar neurological conditions more opportunities and a wider array of activities to choose from, this can also increase their life experiences and help them to develop as a person. This is through giving them a chance to experience different activities and to develop their confidence, self-esteem and life skills.

The results of the questions which asked about whether individuals would attend a sports and / or a recreational camp also revealed that the idea of a sports and / or a recreational camp was very appealing to individuals, parents, carers, guardians, therapists and other professionals. All three questionnaires which were used in the study recorded above 80% of respondents stating that if they did attend a sports and / or a recreational camp, such an experience would benefit them or someone which they know who had Cerebral Palsy or a similar neurological condition. The findings indicated that camps would widen individuals' experiences as well as develop their personal and social skills, confidence and wellbeing. The perceived benefits were as being:

- To have the opportunity to develop their confidence and life experiences,
- To have the opportunity to meet new people and to experience independence away from home,
- To have the opportunity to learn life skills,
- If attending a sports camp, to have the opportunity to develop their experience of a sport and of sports training,
- If attending a sports camp, to have the chance to focus on sports training and to gain advice and feedback on their sports training from other coaches and sport professionals.

Therefore, from the analysis, it can be determined that sports and recreational camps would provide individuals with Cerebral Palsy and similar neurological conditions with an increase level of opportunities to broaden their sport and recreational experiences, which can also broaden their life experiences and influence their personal development. The development of sports and recreational camps which are inclusive for individuals with Cerebral Palsy and similar neurological conditions are therefore vital, as sports and recreational camps can also improve individuals' skills sets and increase their sports and recreational interests and participation. Consequently, it is recommended that while developing and delivering a camp, it is important to think about the individuals attending camp, what are their needs and sport and recreational interests. This is so that the camp design can be based upon the camp participants' needs and that the camp can be engaging for the participants. It is also recommended that the development and delivery of sports and recreational camps has to be seen as an investment in societal development.

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Introduction

The basis of this report is to present the findings from the camps questionnaires, discuss the findings and to make conclusions and recommendations.

The Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CPISRA) is an organisation which supports and encourages the development of sports and recreational opportunities for individuals with Cerebral Palsy or with similar neurological conditions. As part of the 2015-2019 strategic plan, CPISRA's vision is to make sure that:

“All people who have CP or related neurological conditions have the opportunity to benefit from and participate in sport and recreation throughout the World”



As a part of this strategy, between September 2017 and November 2017, CPISRA collected questionnaire data from 150 respondents in order to look into the demand and use of camps as a way of increasing individuals' sport and recreation participation levels, as well as increasing the number of sport and recreational opportunities that individuals with Cerebral Palsy and similar neurological conditions have. To provide a context of how much individuals with Cerebral Palsy and similar neurological conditions participate within sports and recreation, the questionnaires also collected data on individuals' sports and recreational participation rates. Overall, there were three types of questionnaires:

- One which was designed for individuals which had Cerebral Palsy or a similar neurological condition,
- One which was designed for parents, carers and guardians,
- One which was for professionals who work with individuals with Cerebral Palsy and individuals who had similar neurological conditions.

Methodology

In order to collect the data, there were four stages to the research design:

1. The initial decision to undertake questionnaire research,
2. The design of the questionnaires,
3. The distribution of the questionnaires,
4. The analysis of the questionnaire.

The first stage of the questionnaire research was the initial decision to undertake questionnaires. Similarly, due to the need to understand a demand for sports and recreation camps, as well as how much individuals would be prepared to travel to attend a sport and / or recreation camp, it was decided that questionnaire research would help to gather data upon individuals' opinions. The element of understanding current participation rates in sports and recreation as well as individuals' attitudes towards the benefits of sport and recreation for individuals with Cerebral Palsy or with similar conditions, was thought to provide an understanding to how much individuals would gain from participating in a camp if camps were set up. CPISRA chose to survey individuals with Cerebral Palsy or similar conditions, parents, carers and guardians, and professionals who might work with them (such as, physios, teachers, sports coaches). But to also keep the questionnaire as simple as possible, it was decided to make three types of questionnaires based upon whether a person was an individual with Cerebral Palsy or a similar neurological condition, a parent, carer or guardian, or a professional. Likewise, each questionnaire was designed online and had the facilities for respondents to make additional comments throughout the questionnaire if they so wished to.

The second stage of the questionnaire research was the distribution of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were firstly distributed by sharing the questionnaires with the CPISRA's membership and then posting the questionnaires on CPISRA's Facebook page and Twitter platform. After this, the researcher began sharing the questionnaires with other research groups and organisations, asking them to distribute the questionnaires to relevant individuals that they knew had Cerebral Palsy or a similar neurological condition, or any individuals who had worked with people with Cerebral Palsy or similar neurological conditions.

The third stage was the analysis which comprised of an initial look at the results of the questionnaires and later, a more in-depth examination and comparison of the data.

Findings

The profile of the data

The response rate to the three questionnaires was 150, whereby most of the participants were from Europe (see Figure 1). Even though the response rate was lower than expected, the data still has value and represents a significant number of people's views on sports and recreation as well as the demand for camps. Particularly, looking at the age ranges and gender groups across all three questionnaires gives an indication that whilst some within certain age or gender groups responded more than others (see Figure 2). Most (if not, all) of the participants had really good experience of the dynamics of Cerebral Palsy and had real life experience of the potential impact of sports and recreation opportunities on the lives of individuals with Cerebral Palsy or a similar neurological condition. Therefore, making the findings credible.

Figure 1 – Where do the participants live around the world?

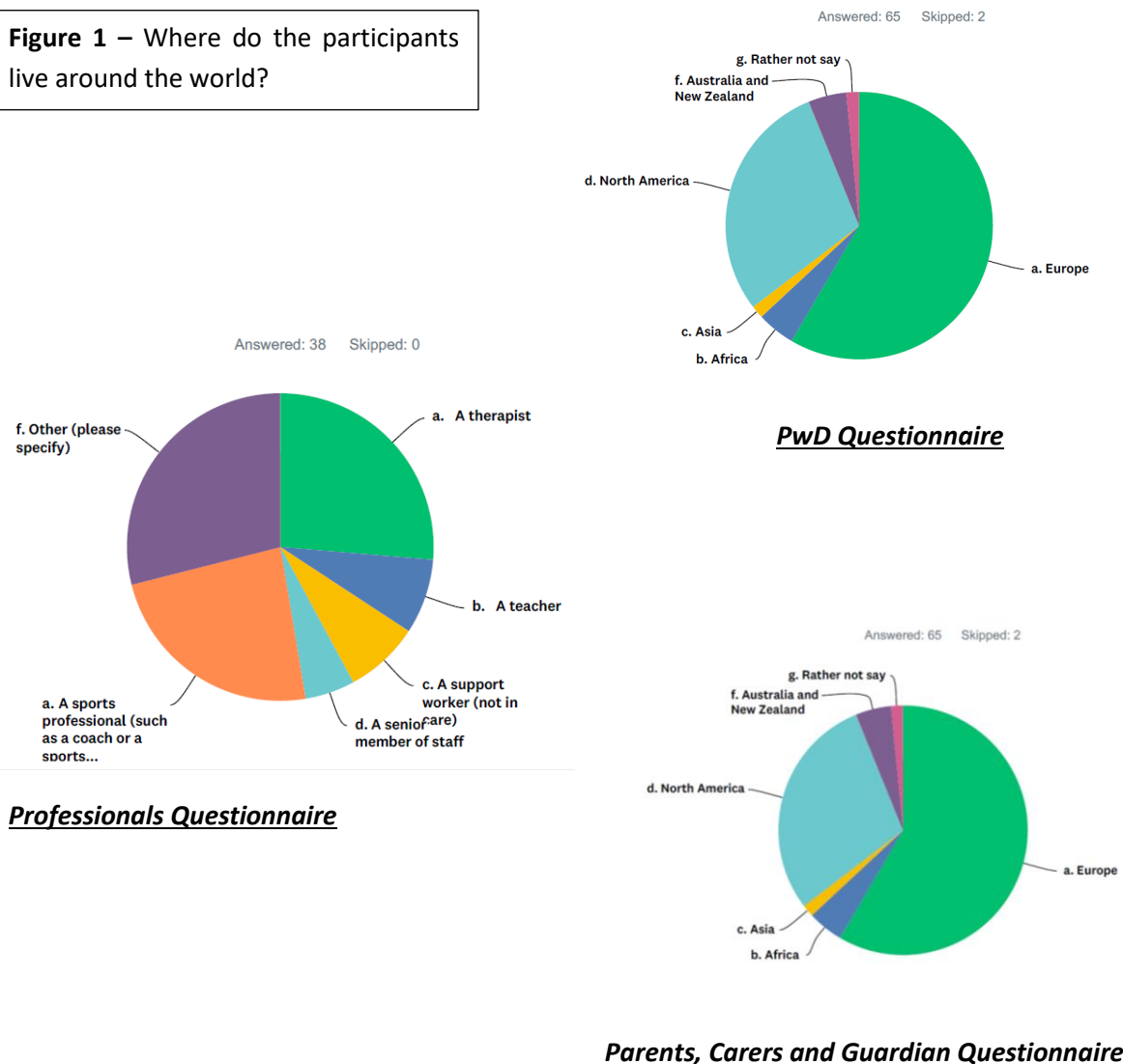
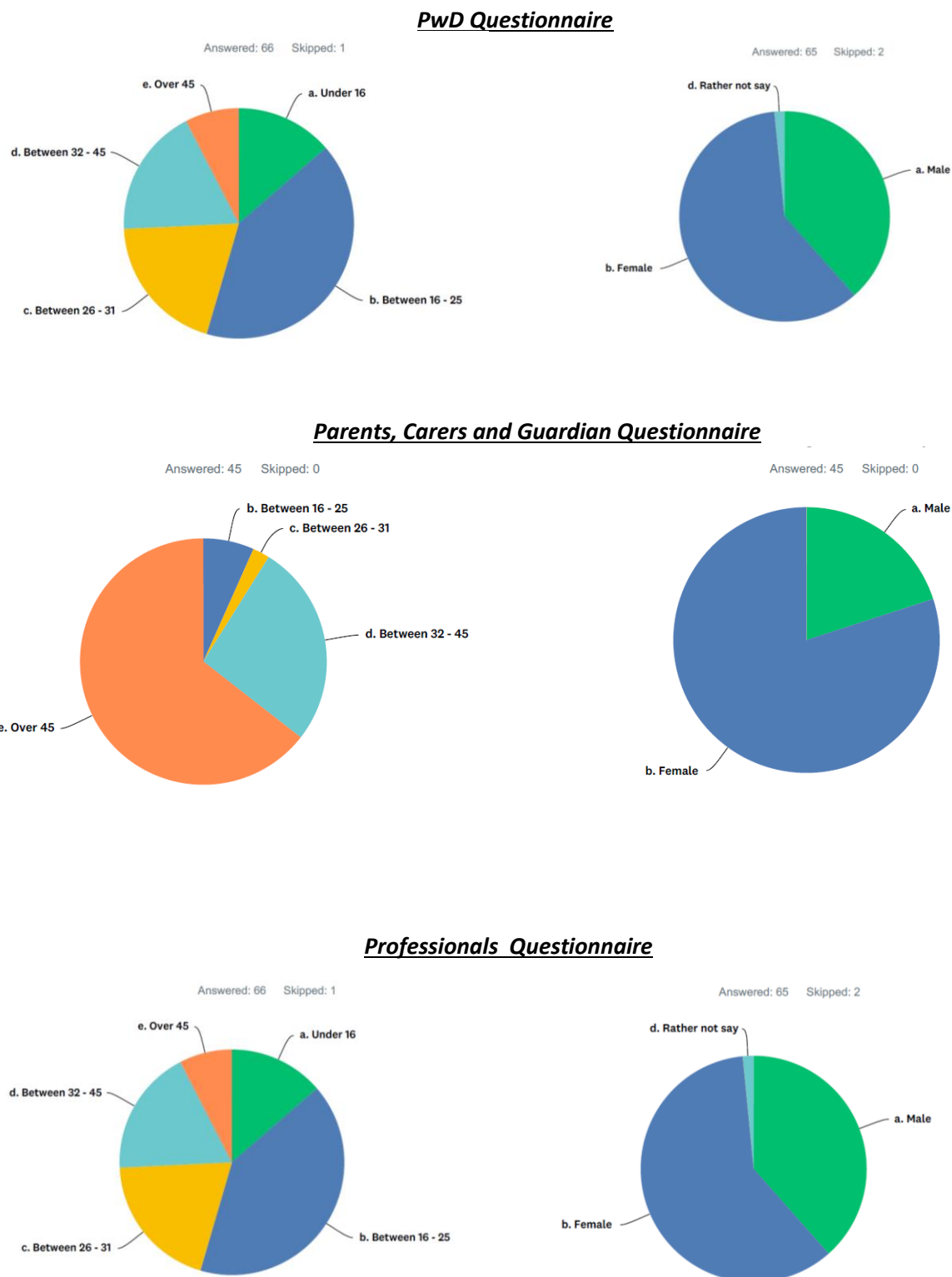


Figure 2 – The age and gender of the participants



Also, some of the comments left within the 'Any other comment box' said thank you for carrying out this research. For example, one parent said:

"Brilliant idea, behind you 110%, our children/young people need/deserve more opportunities like this"

Whereas, someone else said:

"To have a camp would be so beneficial to my daughter as she cannot access any other forms of camps and this limits her ability to go overseas for competition which [then] limits her life experiences and enjoyment from sport. She has limited social interaction and this would benefit her immensely to have social interaction with other athletes with shared interests. This would help her emotionally and physically and enhance her life"

And, two individuals with Cerebral Palsy or with a similar condition said:

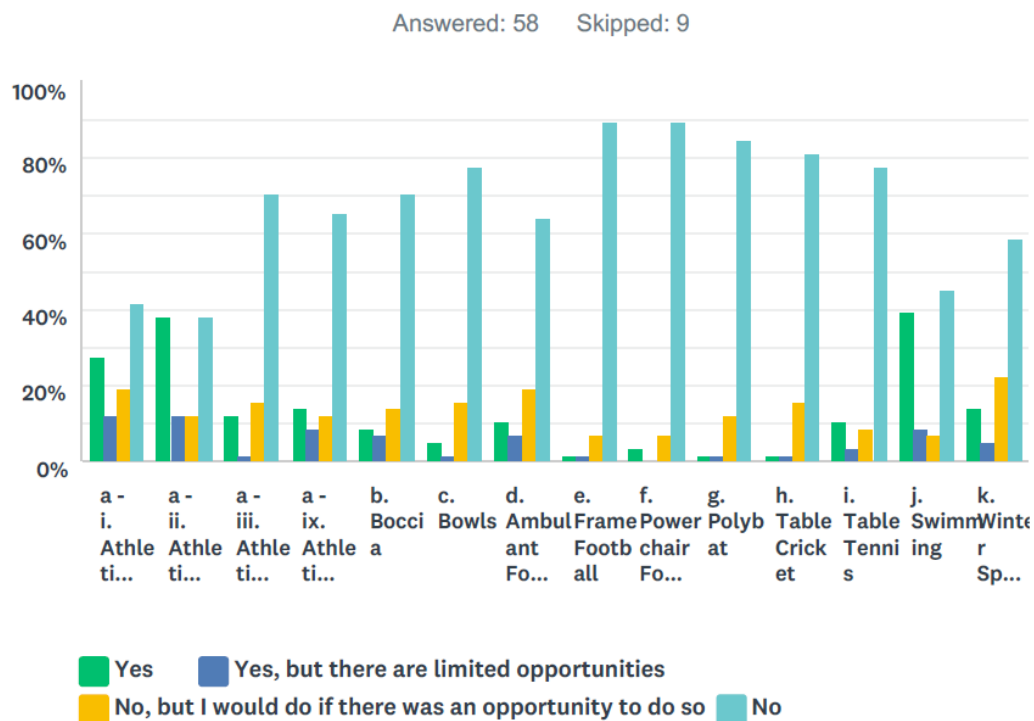
"I want to expand on the experience I had at Nottingham CP world games, It gave me a new confidence that I or my parents never knew I had??"

"Thank you for doing this and especially for including people with conditions that are similar to but not just cerebral palsy"

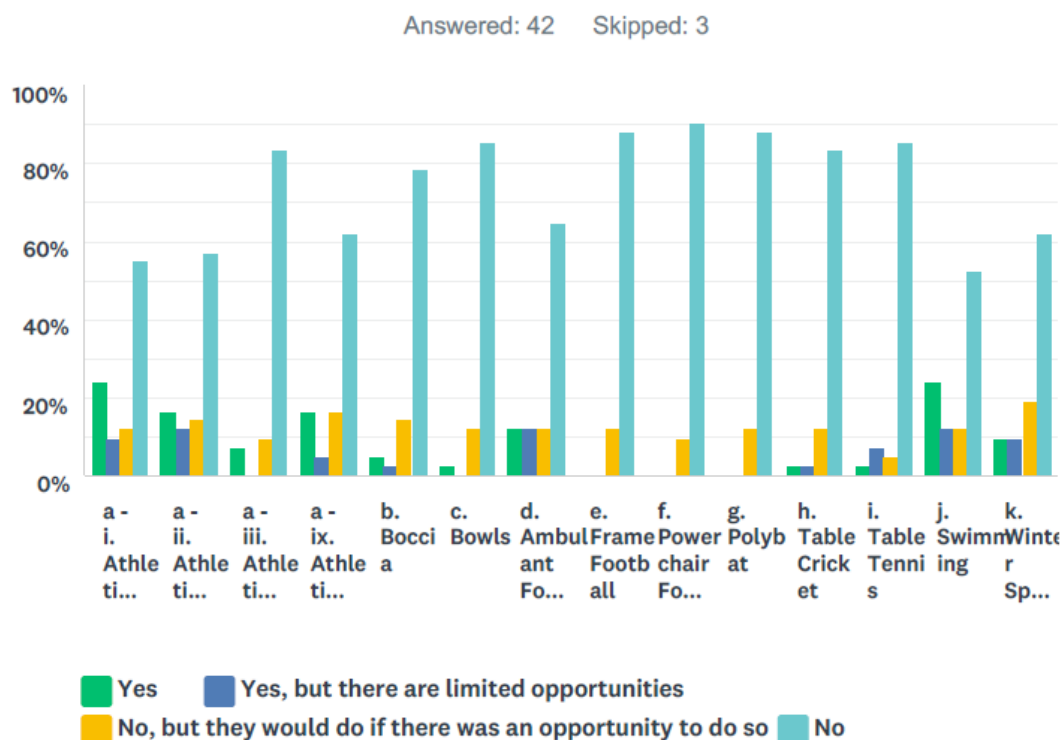
The comments within this section therefore indicated as well that not only most people supported the idea of camps. But, that individuals knew what difference a sport or recreational camp could have on them, individuals who they know or their child, and the questionnaires would allow them have a voice this issue. Hence, telling the researcher that despite a lower than predicted response rate, the data was not bias and that there was a clear demand and interest for camps.

Sports and recreational activities questions (PwD and Carers questionnaires only)

When looking at the questions which asked what sports and recreation activities people do, it was quite interesting to see most individuals were not doing sports (see Figure 3) but were doing recreational activities (see Figure 4). It was also interesting to identify that within the sports question, there were slight differences between the individuals with Cerebral Palsy and their parents / carers / guardians stating that they would try activities if there was an opportunity. Even though it can be viewed that individuals with Cerebral Palsy might be not necessarily think yes or no in this question, but somewhere in between as they may have more of a feeling to what they might enjoy if given the opportunity. It does illustrate that there would be individuals who might try different sports and recreational activities if there was an opportunity to do so.

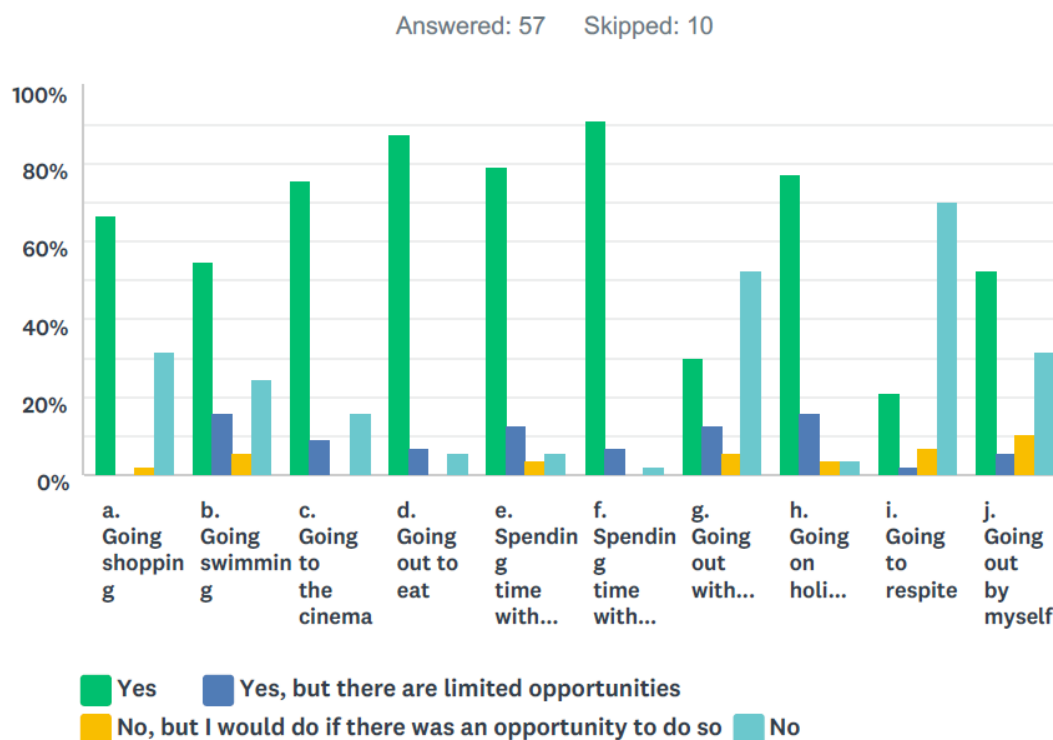
Figure 3 – What sport activities do they do?

PwD Questionnaire

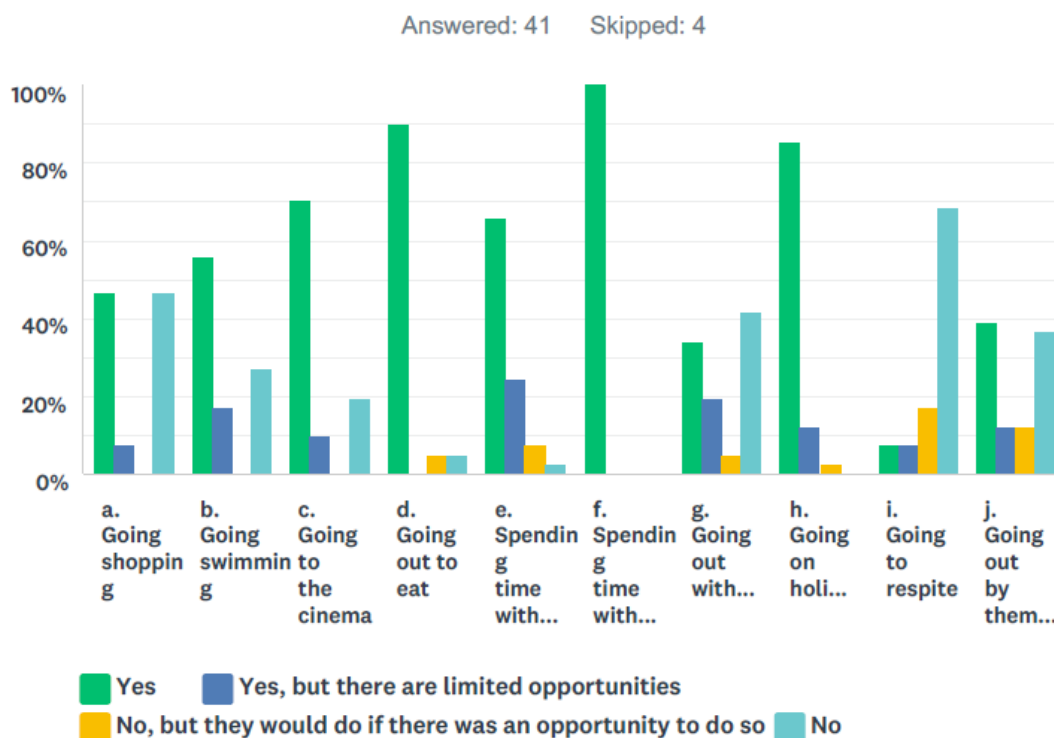


Parents, Carers and Guardian Questionnaire

Figure 4 – What recreational activities do they do?



PwD Questionnaire



Parents, Carers and Guardian Questionnaire

The 'I find that participating within sports and recreation' question

Within the 'I find that participating within sports and recreation' question, it was interesting and particularly useful to find that most of the participants strongly agreeing with the statements about the benefits of sport and recreation. The questions asked participants if there was personal, social and life skills benefits to participating within sports and recreation. There were people who disagreed and had no opinion. However, the data suggests that most people throughout the three questionnaires found that there are serious benefits to sports and recreation. Equally, due to the type of questions asked, looking at the implications of sports and recreation mostly on personal and social development, most of the answers from the respondents showed an agreement that sport and recreation help the individual to develop personal and social skills.

The comments from some of the participants also provided interesting and useful understanding into the role and significance of sports and recreation. This is because the comments which the participants made across all of the questionnaires highlighted personal accounts of the importance of sports and recreation, the positive health implications and the implications of personal and social development. The comments showed short but detailed accounts to the significance of sport and recreation:

"I currently volunteer with a weeklong residential camp for kids and teens with CP, so I can say that I've seen 1st hand the amazing impact that programs like this can have! So excited that CPISRA is delving into this!"

"Through personal experience Swimming has helped my Daughter through her whole life and will continue to do so. She was able to compete at the World CP games in Nottingham in 2015 and is keen to compete in the World CP games in Spain in 2018. Don't mean to rave on but can't stress enough how I believe sport and Rec can help so much. My daughter is now enjoying the last three weeks of a three month overseas holiday in the UK and Europe"

Whereas, an individual with Cerebral Palsy or another neurological condition mentioned:

"Participating in sports is the exercise of my independence not [the] development of it"

As a result, these types of comments illustrate that it is really important to understand the role which sport and recreation plays in the lives of individuals with Cerebral Palsy and similar neurological conditions. Emphasising how sport and recreation can be used as a platform for individuals to feel empowered and to experience something that makes them feel like a person beyond their disability.

The comments also gave accounts to why there was an importance of creating more opportunities, creating a favour of the possible challenges that individuals live with and how having opportunities create a difference. For example, one parent said:

"My daughter was very isolated before sport, and more so now that she has left college, she has no friends outside her sports peers"

Whereas, one individual said:

"[It] Helps me be in less pain"

As a result, these quotes illustrate the impact of having the opportunity to participate in sports and recreation. They illustrate how sport and recreation opportunities may help the individual to experience life beyond the disability, influencing the experience of positive health, wellbeing and connecting with the wider world. Likewise, the comments illustrate that if opportunities are not created or encouraged, then this fails the individual. Hence, the value of sport and recreation to someone with a disability is crucial and important to understand.

The camps questions

When it came to the camp questions, it was clear that the idea of sports and recreational camps became popular with the participants, with most of the respondents ticking 'It would' or 'It would really help ...'. The respondents were clear in regard to the benefits a sports / recreational camp may offer people (see Figure 5 and 6). This was also reflected within some of the comments.

"My mum is guiding me but I would like more help"

"After competing in the CP world games in Nottingham, I have more confidence, met new people and learned a lot about myself, it was the first time away from home on my own, but I now know I have the confidence, willpower and ability to succeed in my sport"

"it would be beneficial to get training tip from coaches that have CP knowledge and understanding"

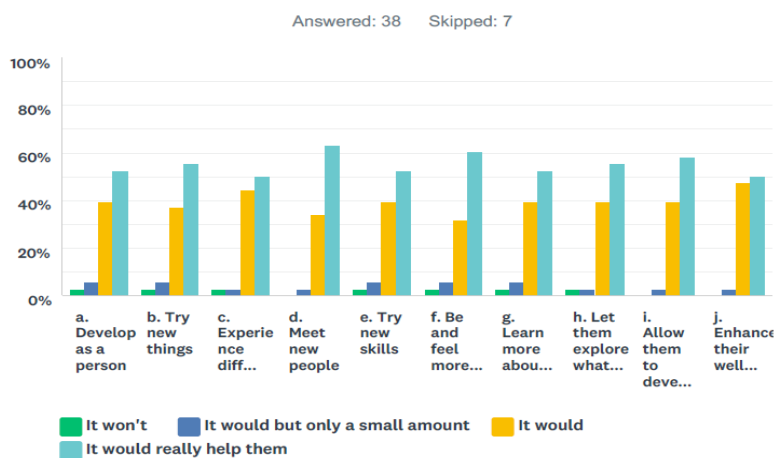
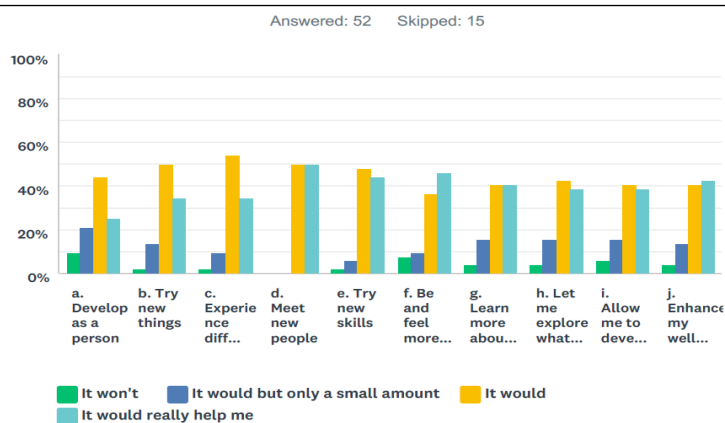
"This survey is very accurate in its questioning because personally I believe sport is huge in helping in so many ways"

"they would also gain experience of time management, knowing when they needed to be ready and prepared for sessions at the required time"

"My daughter is at a stage with her sport that it, for want of a better word gone 'stale', she has so, so, so much more to give to sport and more significantly allows her to gain more experience and confidence"

Figure 5 – Responds to the perceived benefits of a recreational camp

PwD Questionnaire



Parents, Carers and

Guardian Questionnaire

Professionals

Questionnaire

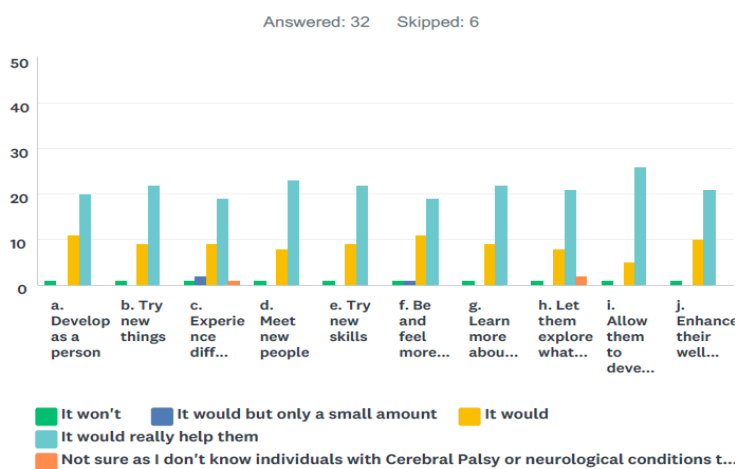
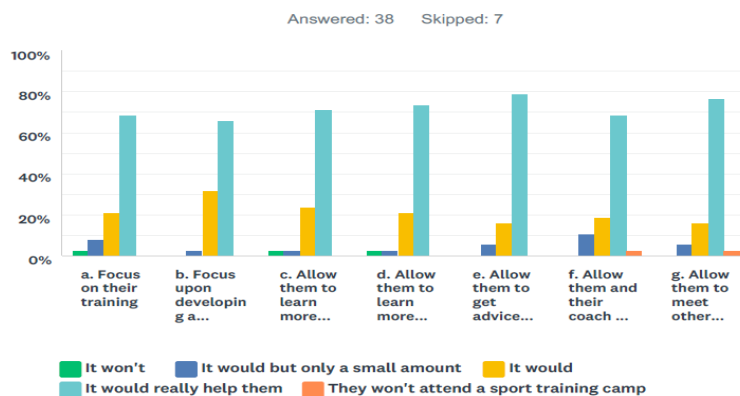
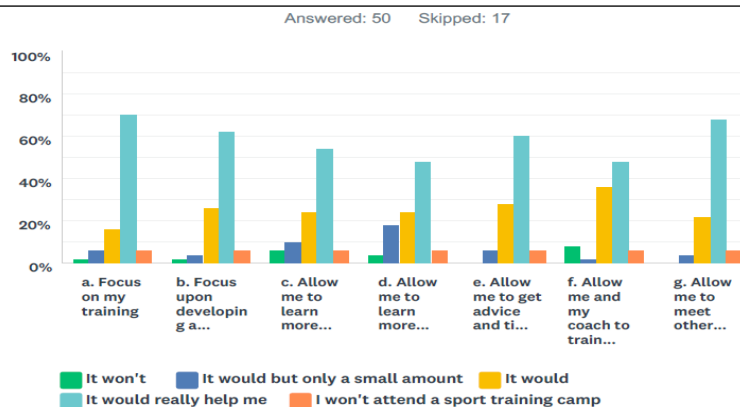


Figure 6 – The perceived benefits of a sports training camp

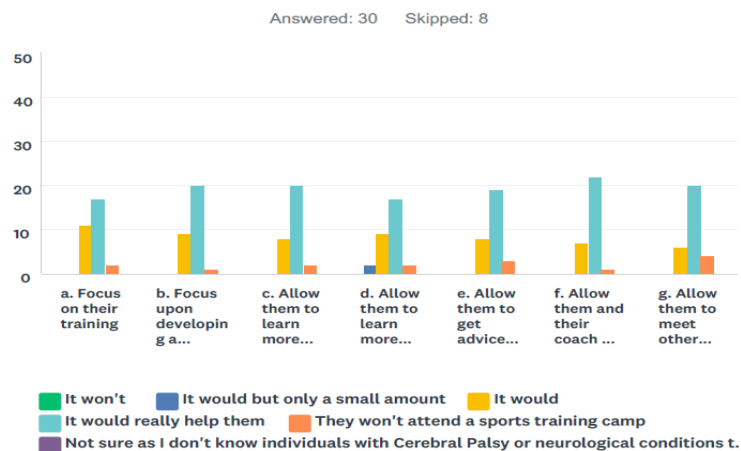
PwD Questionnaire



Parents, Carers and Guardian Questionnaire

Professionals

Questionnaire



Furthermore, when designing the questionnaires, the researcher wrote the questions in order to give a specific idea of what the participants may gain from attending a camp. As a result, by most of the respondents across the questionnaires ticking 'It would' or 'It would really help ...', this illustrated that the specific social and personal benefits of camps would occur if the camp / activities were planned carefully.

What was also interesting was that within the 'what sports do you do?' question which appeared earlier in the questionnaires, there was a low proportion of individuals participating within sports. However, most people indicated that the benefits of being a sports camp would be huge. This suggests that attending a sports training camp might be beneficial not just to experienced athletes. But, also for individuals who might not be engaged in sports.

Locations of camps

Within the question of where will people be willing to go to attend camp, the data indicated that people would be interested to go to both a sports and recreational camp. Some people also indicated that they would attend either a sports or recreational camp anywhere in the world. However, there were other people (a smaller amount) who did indicate that they might only attend a sport or a recreational camp. Some people also indicated that they would not travel intercontinental or outside of their country to attend camp.

Summary

Even though the questionnaires only got 150 responses, the overall data from the three questionnaires showed there was a clear demand for sports and recreational camps for individuals with Cerebral Palsy and individuals with similar neurological conditions, as there is internationally:

1. A lack of programmed-based sport or recreation activities which are accessible and meet the needs of a variety of individuals,
2. A need to create more age appropriate activities that can give individuals a chance to be enriched and to experience the wider world,
3. A need to create more opportunities for personal and social development away from the comforts of home,
4. A need to create environments which allow individuals to train and development within their sport or to be introduced to sport,

5. A need to have an emphasis that opportunities need to be created regardless of ability of the individual in order to create opportunities for all to experience different aspects of life and what they can achieve

Whilst the data has not been tested statistically and therefore cannot be stated as statistically significant, it is important to note that there is a high proportion of the sample illustrating that sports and recreation opportunities are fundamentally important to create. Equally, it is stated sports and recreation camps designed specifically around the needs of individuals with Cerebral Palsy or similar neurological conditions would help to create an increase level of opportunities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this report was to present and discuss the findings from the questionnaire research which was done by CPISRA, on the participation rates of individuals involved in sports and recreation, as well as the demand for Cerebral Palsy oriented sports and recreation camps. In turn, it was found that there was a serious demand for sports and recreation camps where such opportunities would expand:

- a) Individuals experiences as well as their sports and recreation skills,
- b) Encourage individuals with their confidence, self-esteem, life skills and encourage the individual to believe in what they can do.

However, the findings also identified that whilst individuals would benefit from, and most would attend camps. Such activities have to be interesting, enjoyable and encourage a sense of ability, rather than just be a set of activities that are accessible.

The recommendations are that any organiser of a camp or similar opportunity has to firstly think about what the camp is going to achieve, what types of activities will be used to achieve this and are the activities going to challenge or encourage a sense of determination within the individual. The second recommendation is therefore to think about the potential individuals attending the camp. Who are they? Will they be attracted to attending a camp, depending upon what is on offer? How can the organisers increase the perceived value of what they will offer? The third recommendation follows on from this and encourage organisers to see camps as a way of giving opportunities and widening the sports and recreation inclusion spectrum, rather than just seeing it as just putting on some activities for individuals to participate within. The final recommendation is to see this as an investment opportunity in societal development and creating more opportunities for individuals to exercise their human right to sport and recreation.