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GRT EFFICACY OF UNIFIED PLAY IN DEVELOPING PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SELF ESTEEM AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN AN INCLUSIVE SUMMER CAMP

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Abstract:-The study has been conducted to find out the efficacy of unified play on developing different components of Physical Fitness (Balance, Power & Agility) and Self Esteem among individuals with intellectual disability. Using purposive sampling technique samples has been selected in the age group of 17-22 years without any associated condition. The sample size was 14 children with moderate intellectual disability who were paired with a partner in order to make a unified pair. The intervention was planned with physical and cognitive based play activities with necessary modifications and adaptations for their safety purpose. The intervention was implemented in an “Inclusive Summer Camp” with a total of 32 sessions. Subjects were fully involved in the intervention directly by the researcher. The pre and post tests scores of the sample were analyzed quantitatively. The findings revealed that there is a significant effect of unified play on physical fitness and self esteem among the selected sample. The significance of unified play on each component of physical fitness (balance, power & agility) was analyzed separately through t-test. On the whole, the intervention was found to be effective in improving physical fitness and self esteem of Individuals with intellectual disability.

Keywords: Unified Play, Unified Pair, Physical Fitness, Self Esteem, Individuals with Moderate Intellectual Disability.

INTRODUCTION

People with intellectual disabilities are amongst the most marginalized in many societies around the world [1]. On the other hand, the impact of recent advancement toward normalization of people with intellectual disability has been remarkable [2], [3] & [4]. However, despite these advances social acceptance of those with intellectual disability remains [5], [6] & [7].

Although the individuals with intellectual disability have a limited cognitive capacity, it should not be inferred that they are incapable of performing physically in both informal and organized sports and play activities. In fact, if there are no secondary complications other than the intellectual disabilities, there should not be any difficulty in performing physical activities which are simple and the person is able to understand the instruction to perform the task. Thus, it can be inferred that an individual with intellectual disability has the same potential to participate in play and recreational activity as his or her peers.

In recent times much attention has been directed towards developing the role of physical activities for improving the health and well being of children and youth with developmental disorders. An important part of this process is improving the level of physical fitness as well as earning skills. Many studies show that physical development and level of physical fitness of children and youth with mental retardation is poor [8] & [9]. It is seen that deeper the retardation, lower is the physical performance [9].

Children with intellectual disability frequently have poor physical fitness with poor muscular coordination. It is further seen that the conditions becomes progressively more severe as the retarded child grow older, partly as a result of limited physical fitness. Children with intellectual disability can and should participate safely and productively in the activities which improve their physical fitness, when appropriate supervision is provided. Moreover, past research has documented the benefits for participating athletes primarily in terms of gains in physical and mental well-being, sport skills and in self esteem [12].

The individual and social benefits of sport have been made available to children (and adults) with intellectual

disability through the Special Olympics since 1968 [13], but this movement has increasingly been criticized for being segregated [14] & [15]. In reaction to this criticism, Unified Sports is a relatively new Special Olympics program that combines similar numbers of athletes with an intellectual disability with athletes without a disability (called partners) on sports teams for training and competition. This is meaningful inclusion within a valued community activity [16]. The Special Olympics Unified Play provides an opportunity for Individuals with and without intellectual disabilities to play competitive and recreational activities together in mixed teams. As unified athletes and partner performs together, they begin to self-evaluate, which in so doing, cultivates their self-concept and self-esteem [17].

Abraham Maslow states that psychological health is not possible unless the essential core of the person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by others and by her or his self. Self-esteem is a concept well used in psychology to describe how a person evaluates their worth and can be viewed positively and negatively. It allows people to face life with more confidence, benevolence and optimism, and thus easily reach their goals and self-actualize. Self esteem is higher stage of hierarchy of human need. Social comparison is associated with self-esteem and depression in people with intellectual disability in the same way as it is for people without intellectual disability. Depression was significantly negatively correlated with positive self-esteem [18].

Ying Li, Tam and Man [19] explored the self-concepts of Hong Kong Chinese with intellectual disabilities. Face-to-face and individual interviews were conducted in Cantonese, using the Chinese version of the Adult Source of Self-Esteem Inventory (ASSEI) together with three open-ended questions to explore the participants' self-conceptions in different life domains. An opportunity sample of 135 young adults with intellectual disabilities was interviewed. The findings showed that the family self, the social self and achievement in school and work were the self-concept attributes most important to the participants. The participants of this study had a higher total self-concept than that of a comparison group of people without disabilities when the participants used the in-group social comparison to maintain positive self-perception. The importance of partnership with family, self-concept enhancement strategies and quality employment service are discussed in order to facilitate people with intellectual disabilities to develop more positive self-concepts and thus achieve better community integration.

The perception of stigma in 43 adults with an intellectual disability, the relationship this has with their psychological well-being and whether the process of social comparison has a moderating effect on this relationship. A questionnaire-based, within-participant design was used. Participants completed three self-report measures of perception of stigma, self-esteem and social comparison. Perception of stigma was found to be significantly related to negative social comparisons, which in turn was significantly related to low self-esteem. Social comparison was not found to have a moderating effect on the relationship between stigma and self-esteem. This study provides support for the influence of the perception of stigma and social comparison on the self-concept of individuals with an intellectual disability [20].

Johnson [21] was interested to know that how prevalent low self-esteem was in a population of people with learning disabilities in a forensic service. She used an adapted version of the Rosenberg Self Esteem scale where statements relating to self esteem are answered on a four point scale and the adapted Evaluative Beliefs Scale which measures negative person evaluations. What she found was that the majority of the men scored as having moderate or high self-esteem on both the self-esteem measures which the authors were not expecting. The authors conclude from that study that the personal concept of self esteem is complex, with many influencing factors. She suggested that cognitive behavior therapy may have a specific role in realizing and overcoming negative core beliefs and feelings of low self-worth.

OBJECTIVE

The study intended to find out the effect of unified play on developing physical fitness (Power, Balance & Agility) and self esteem among individuals with moderate intellectual disability.

METHODS

Participants:

Sample comprised of 14 individuals with moderate intellectual disability IQ 35 -55. Sample was drawn from the group of students with intellectual disability who were participating with students without disability in a summer camp. The sample was from pre-vocational and vocational group and their age ranges from 17-22, and has been paired with partners without intellectual disability, who participated in the summer camp. For the camp, a general circular was sent to 40 families for sending their child with intellectual disability for one month summer camp and in response to the circular only 14 children with intellectual disability were enrolled in the camp. Similarly 10 regular schools were also requested to send unified partner (children without disability) from each school for participation in inclusive summer camp. A total 20 unified partner (children without disability) were enrolled in the camp and out of them 14 were selected who matched with the child with intellectual disability in terms of gender and age.

Tools:

Objective of the present study was achieved with the following tools:

1. Balance: Stork Standing Balance Test,
2. Power: Standing Broad Jump,
3. Shuttle Run Test and
4. Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

Procedure:

Data collection was started with prior consent of school administration and informed consent from the participants as well as their caregivers. Age and IQ of the participants was indexed from the school records. Purposive sampling technique was used to pickup sample. The pairing was done by combination of individual with intellectual disability and one without intellectual disability by insuring the similarity in their gender and age. Selected tools were administered to all the participants indicating baseline information. All unified pairs underwent the intervention of unified play which was based on physical as well as cognitive aspects. The investigator conducted a total 32 sessions of unified play of 50-60 minutes duration for all 14 unified pairs. After completion of assigned period of intervention, the above mention tools were re- administered and the obtained scores were compared and interpreted by using SPSS.

Results

Table 1- Comparison of Pre and Post Tests Mean Scores of Physical Fitness (Balance, Power & Agility)

Variable	Test	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p- value
Balance	Pre	13	4.38	2.022	12	6.23	<.001**
	Post	13	14.85	5.505			
Power	Pre	13	41.77	11.211	12	5.89	<.001**
	Post	13	69.69	15.354			
Agility	Pre	13	14.62	4.388	12	8.00	<.001**
	Post	13	24.38	6.035			

Table 1 depict the comparison of Mean scores, SD of pre and post tests. While analyzing the pre test Mean scores of balance of the sample, the obtained Mean and SD were 4.38, 2.022 respectively whereas for post test, the Mean and SD were 14.85, 5.505 respectively. The calculated't' value 6.23 is significant at 1% level of significance. It is inferred that there is significant difference between pre and post tests mean scores of balance. In the pre test on power, the sample have obtained Mean scores as 41.77 and SD is 11.211 where as in the Post Test, the Mean is 69.69 and SD is 15.354. The calculated't' value 5.89 is significant at 1% level of significance. It is inferred that there is significant difference between pre and post tests mean scores of power. The analysis on the scores of agility showed that the sample have obtained Mean as 14.62 and SD as 4.388 in the pre test where as in the Post Test, the Mean is 24.38 and SD is 6.035. The calculated't' value 8.00 is significant at 1% level of significance. It is inferred that there is significant difference between pre and post tests mean scores of agility.

Table: 2 Comparison of Pre and Post Tests Mean Scores of Self Esteem

Variable	Test	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p- value
Self Esteem	Pre	13	14.00	3.342	12	7.23	<.001**
	Post	13	23.77	3.113			

In order to find out the effect of unified play on self esteem among individuals with intellectual disability, it was hypothesized that there will be no significant effect of unified play on self esteem among individuals with intellectual disability. To test this hypothesis, differences were explored by applying paired sample t- test. The result of paired sample t- test indicates that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of level self esteem among individuals with intellectual disability. Mean scores obtained by the sample in the pre test is 14.00 and SD is 3.342 where as in the post test, the Mean is

23.77 and SD is 3.113. The calculated 't' value 7.23 is significant at .001 level.

DISCUSSION

This study indicates that unified play improved physical fitness as well as self esteem among individuals with intellectual disability during the intervention phase in comparisons with the base line phase. It has been inferred that the intervention positively mediated because the activities selected for the intervention were scientifically planned which were interesting and achievable for the participants. The following were the activities to be performed - completion of the task by finger and hand manipulation, running for collection of distributed materials, hitting, jumping etc. Individuals with intellectual disability have limitations only on cognitive level and they can develop themselves physically like any other people, if opportunity is given. In schools and training centers, generally stress is given for training of daily living activities, functional academics, vocational placement and recreational, physical and sports activities are generally neglected.

In the present study play activities were simple flexible and planned by focusing on components of fitness. In addition because, these activities were comparative new and interesting experience for the participants, so they enjoyed the activities a lot and used their fullest effort as well as got the assistance of their unified partner during the play activities.

Prior research conducted by Dagnan & Sandhu (1999) [18] revealed social comparison, self-esteem and depression in people with intellectual disability, confirm significant positive correlation between positive self-esteem and social comparison on the achievement dimension. So stigma and social exclusion may be a cause of low or negative self esteem. During the summer camp all Individuals with intellectual disability showed significant improvement in self esteem, because they got an opportunity to play with their unified partners and perform the activities with them. In some play events they performed better than their unified partners.

Finally as a result of unified play during summer camp, individuals with intellectual disability were able to move from less to more in terms of self esteem as well as significantly improved their fitness compared with the base line phase.

CONCLUSION

With resource available to them, individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities can participate with a partner without intellectual disability, in a full range of physically as well as cognitive oriented play and recreation activities. It not only keeps them physically fit but also help them to improve their cognitive levels to achieve a better quality of life. United Nations has promoted people with disabilities, such as the UNCRPD which has the aim of ensuring: "the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity".

The challenge remains however, of translating the rhetoric of rights into new realities for persons with an intellectual disability. The Unified play could be conceived as an attempt to do this. It certainly fulfils the aspiration contained in Article 30.5 (a) of the UN Convention which states: "To encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all level";

The most important message for the educational administrators, policymakers and educators, as an outcome of this study is that students with and with and without intellectual disability can be brought together in a meaningful way to lead their all-round development.

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