**UQ Summer or Winter Research Project Description**

Please use this template to create a description of each research project, eligibility requirements and expected deliverables. Project details can then be uploaded to each faculty, school, institute, and centre webpage prior to the launch of the program.

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| **Project title:** | **Understanding the influence of daily routines for people with disability participating or wanting to participate in sport and exercise: An exploratory study.** |
| **Hours of engagement & delivery mode** | Completion of this project will occur over a six-week period and will involve approximately 36 hours per week. |
| **Description:** | **Background**  Disability has been suggested to occur when the interaction between an individual’s health condition and environmental factors impacts their ability to fully engage within their daily occupations (World Health Organisation, n.d.). Approximately 4.4 million Australians live with a disability. Recent data have shown that individuals living with disability are more likely to report experiencing poorer mental and physical health when compared to those not living with disability, with inactivity and weight related concerns most frequently rated as a health risk factors (Australia Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020). There is clear evidence to support the benefits of regular participation in physical activity including reduced risk of chronic health conditions, improved cognitive ability, and improved physical (including weight management) and mental health and wellbeing (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020; Bodde & Seo, 2009).  People with disability have high levels of inactivity, with 72% of Australians living with disability not reporting sufficient levels of physical activity for health benefits according to Australian physical activity guidelines (Australia Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020). Physical inactivity has the potential to negatively impact on people with disability’s independence, social interactions, and employment (Obrusnikova et al., 2021).  Two ways in which individuals could engage in physical activity is through exercise and sporting activities. Over the past two decades there has been increasing interest in the potential benefits of sport and exercise on the overall health, well-being, and quality of life of people with disability (Martin, Ginis & Smith, 2018). This has been observed through the increased development of exercise programs specific to people with disability, as well as the inclusion of twenty-eight sports within the Paralympic games (Martin Ginis & Smith, 2018). With the increased research and interest in supporting people with disability to participate in sport and exercise, one could question why there continues to be such low levels of participation.  Several internal and external factors have been identified to either support or hinder people with disability to participate in sport and exercise. Internal barriers include a lack of understanding of the importance of sport and exercise, lack of awareness of the options available, and lack of self-esteem and self-confidence (Bodde & Seo, 2009; Bossink et al., 2017; Cocks et al., 2017; Ives et al., 2021; Taliaferro & Hammond, 2016). External barriers include a lack of social support, lack of appropriate program options, lack of access to appropriate facilities, and lack of training and education of fitness staff (Bodde & Seo, 2009; Bossink et al., 2017; Cocks et al., 2017; Ives et al., 202; Jaarsma et al., 2014; Taliaferro & Hammond, 2016). Conversely, factors supporting sport and exercise participation for people with a disability include having adequate social support from family, friends, and fitness staff, and when exercise was viewed as fun and enjoyable (Bodde & Seo, 2009; Bossink et al., 2017)  In 2013, with the aim of supporting the health needs of people with disability the Australian Government released the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2020). The introduction of this funding has meant that individuals are able to financially access services such as sporting and exercise facilities. After gaining access to the NDIS, participants are characterised as requiring either Level 1 (standard supports), Level 2 (high intensity supports) or Level 3 support (very high intensity supports). Participants characterised as Level 2 or 3 require staff members with higher levels of skill and qualifications to meet the support needs of the individuals. This may be due to the participant displaying behaviours that require intensive positive behavioural support and/or additional support due to high medical needs (National Disability Insurance Scheme, n.d.). No information is available however on what this support might look like specifically within a sport and exercise setting. Without a clear understanding of the support needs required by individuals accessing exercise and sporting services there is potential for services to be delivered unsafely, thus wasting NDIS resources, or possibly resulting in harm.  Further, participation in sport and exercise involves the interaction between psychological, social, environmental, and biological factors, requiring a holistic conceptualisation (Biddle et al., 2015). However, no current literature exists exploring how these factors interact together to facilitate or prevent an individual with a disability from participating in exercise and sport. What also remains a gap in the literature is an identification of what specific internal and external supports are required for safe and effective access of community sport and fitness facilities compared to support requirements that require additional assistance from more specialised health professionals such as exercise physiologists, physiotherapists, and/or occupational therapists to participate safely. Therefore, this study aims to address the following objectives:  1.Develop an understanding of 1) the characteristics (health condition, support needs and motivations) of people with disability participating in sport and exercise and 2), and the supports and barriers for people with disability to participate in sport and exercise.  2. Develop an understanding of the daily routines of people with disability who have successfully and ongoingly participated in exercise and sporting activities, along with understand the experience of those who have attempted, however, have been unsuccessful in sustaining exercise or sporting activities long-term.  **Methodology**  This project involved the completion of an online survey and individual interviews. Participants included adults (>18 years) with a disability who were either successfully participating in sport and/or exercise, or who had attempted to participate in sport and/or exercise, however, were unsuccessful. A total of 54 participants completed the survey, and a total of eight people with disability participated in an interview.  Frequency and descriptive statistics obtained through the completion of the online surveys will be analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Short answer responses were then analysed through content analysis to allow for common words, themes, and ideas to be identified (Bengtsson, 2016). Interviews will be transcribed verbatim and analysed following the interpretive description procedure outlined by Thorne (2016) using thematic analysis. Interviews will be analysed to better understand 1) the daily routines of individuals with a disability, 2) perceived facilitators within these routines to support individual’s participation in exercise and sport, 3) barriers within these routines reducing their ability to reach their full potential, 5) current physical, psychological, social, and environmental supports facilitating their participation in exercise and/or sport, 6) additional barriers to participating in exercise and/or sport, 7) recommendations for service providers supporting the participation in exercise and sport. |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | The student involved in this project will gain experience in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and will be involved the writing two manuscripts in preparation for publication. |
| **Suitable for:** | This project will be suitable for an occupational therapy, physiotherapy, or exercise physiology student. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Jess Hill  Co-supervisor: Dr Sjaan Gomersall |
| **Further info:** | If any student has any further question regarding the project then please contact Jess (email: [jessica.hill@uq.edu.au](mailto:jessica.hill@uq.edu.au)). |