

## **ADAPTED SPORTS AND RECREATION: PRESSURE VS. PERFORMANCE**

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There is a greater push for enhancing one's quality of life. One of the most common contributing factors to one's quality of life is ability to participate in recreational activities, which is why more therapists are prescribing adapted sports equipment for their clients. Today's sports equipment is highly specialized with specific factors to consider when prescribing. Participatory goals, pressure concerns, postural needs and custom modification are necessary considerations for safe and continued use.

#### **Background**

The incidence of Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) in Canada is 35 cases per year per million population (excluding fatal or non-deficit injuries). There are an estimated 900 to 1050 Canadians who sustain a SCI each year.<sup>1,2</sup> The estimated annual incidence of SCI in the United States is 40 cases per million population or approximately 11,000 new cases each year.<sup>3</sup>

The above figures demonstrate a growing population living with a SCI. Thus, there is a greater push for enhancing one's quality of life. Recreation, leisure and sports in the community are a means of providing individuals with SCI opportunities to demonstrate abilities, expand social networks and develop new skills.

#### **Considerations for Sports Equipment**

- Level and degree of injury – e.g. C4 vs. incomplete paraplegia
- Working with an interdisciplinary team to help set up appropriate equipment, seating, i.e. regarding pressure sores, respiration, postural hypotension, autonomic dysreflexia.
- Sports and what adapted equipment is available (tennis, court sports, handcycling, racing, skiing, kayaking)
- Opportunities for trial

#### **References**

1. Canadian Paraplegic Association (Nova Scotia). <http://www.nsnet.org/cpans/spine.html>. Accessed July 2006.
2. Rick Hansen Spinal Cord Injury Registry. *Spinal Cord Injury Facts and Statistics*. <http://www.rickhansenregistry.org>. Accessed July 2006.
3. Spinal Cord Injury Information Network. Facts and Figures at a Glance- June 2005. <http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu/show.asp?durki=21446>
4. Sheng, W., Williams, T. 2001. Factors influencing sport participation among athletes with spinal cord injury. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*. 33(2):177-182.

#### **Speaker Bio**

Rich began his career as a professional leisure guy seven years ago. He works at Motion Specialties in Toronto promoting active lifestyles to clients who are interested in sports. No longer balancing his personal life, training and competition time has led Rich to travel around the world competing in various sports with repetitive strain injuries, Advil and a smile. Rich can be reached at [rvanderwal@themotiongroup.com](mailto:rvanderwal@themotiongroup.com)