

## **The perceived effects of taking part in RaceRunning on health and wellbeing**

<sup>1</sup>Centre of Health, Activity and Rehabilitation Research, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, EH21 6UU, Scotland (UK)

van der Linden ML<sup>1</sup>, Verheul MH<sup>3</sup>, Tennant N<sup>4</sup>, Von Walden F<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Pediatric Neurology, Women's and Children's health, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden.

<sup>3</sup> Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, Scotland (UK)

<sup>4</sup> RaceRunning Scotland

Oral or Poster

### **Introduction**

RaceRunning allows people with moderate-to-severe disability to take part in an aerobic activity involving some weight bearing. The aim of this study was to explore the perceived benefits and risks associated with RaceRunning.

### **Participants and Methods.**

A survey containing 25 questions was distributed to RaceRunning coaches and athletes in the UK and Sweden. Completing and returning the survey implied informed consent. Completion by proxy was allowed.

### **Results**

Sixty-five athletes (38 females) completed the survey (Sweden; n=40, UK; n=24, USA, n=1).

Median age was 16 (range 5-63) and the majority relied on a wheelchair (50%) or walker (20%) over a distance of 50m. Most athletes had been involved with RR for more than 1 year (83%) and trained once a week (64%). One reported a RaceRunning related injury that lasted more than 4 weeks. The majority had made new friends (93%) and felt RaceRunning increased their confidence (96%).

Respondents who had been involved in RaceRunning for 3 months or more reported to be a lot less (18%) or a bit less (23%) out of breath during their usual mobility tasks. They felt that their functional mobility was improved (23%: 'a lot', 45%: 'a bit') and reported decreased muscle tightness (15%: 'a lot', 37%: 'a bit'). Only six respondents (10%) reported increased tightness. Sleep quality was perceived to be improved (31% 'a lot', 31% 'a bit').

### **Conclusion**

Athletes perceive a variety of benefits from taking part in RaceRunning. These results also confirm the feasibility of this activity and the importance of stretching.