Self-Image of Athletes with Disability: A New Meaning

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With the accomplishment of the Paralympic Games in Brazil in 2016, the group's desire were to approach the disability theme in an adapted sports context through the prism of self-image, intersecting the areas of psychology and sport, having as research north the following question: Does sport play a different role in re-signifying the self-image of parathletes with congenital and acquired disability? The purpose was to establish a comparison between two situations: parathletes who were born with their disability and the ones who acquired it, analyzing how the person deal with their disability, taking into account the role of sports in the resignification of the self-image in social spheres of these parathletes. By being an exploratory research, it had been carried out through interviews with professionals from the related areas (Sports Psychology, Neurosciences, Physical Education and Occupational Therapy), application of questionnaires with parathletes and bibliographic review of texts related to disability, stigma, self-image and sports. From the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the questionnaires applied, comparisons were made between the two sample groups. The conclusion was that there is, in fact a significant difference in the process of re-signification of the self-image both groups: when about people with congenital disabilities, the sporting practice is a very important positive factor added to their lives, a way of accepting their disability and valuing themselves, considering the fact that they had always lived with it; and when about people that had acquired their disability, it goes beyond that: it is a fundamental part in adapting to their new body, a way of insertion into society.

Awards Won:
American Psychological Association: Certificate of Honorable Mention