



POSTER PRESENTATION

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Sport and exercise habits in children with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA)

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Background

Over the last decade implementation of targeted therapy has improved the functional ability in JIA-children. Also, the attitude towards participation of JIA-children in sport has become less restrictive with growing evidence of the benefits of physical activity on e.g. disease, fitness and quality of life.

Aim

To explore the habits in gym classes and sport in 10-16 year-old JIA-children compared to gender- and age-matched healthy controls.

Methods

68 JIA-children (females 60.3%), age 12.74 (± 1.70) years, disease duration 5.72 (± 4.17) years, and 118 healthy controls (females 50.8%), age 12.36 (± 1.74) years, answered questionnaires on sport and exercise habits and functional ability (CHAQ38). For JIA: VAS-pain, Patient- and Physician-GA were noted.

Results

Mean CHAQ38 scores for JIA: 0.1896 (± 0.2025), controls: 0.0359 (± 0.0799) indicated only minimal functional impairment in both groups. Pain assessments correlated well to CHAQ38 scores in JIA (p-values < 0.01).

No significant differences were found between sport-active JIA-children and controls concerning type and number of sport activities or amount of time spent in sport. Significantly more JIA-children were not sport-active (38% (26/68) vs. 25% (29/118)), mainly due to joint pain (12/26) and getting short of breath/side-stitches (9/26).

Significantly fewer JIA-children participated fully in gym ($p < 0.01$) and reported pain (91% (62/68)) and difficulties with certain activities ($p < 0.01$). Strategies mainly used when pain; a short break (81%), changing activity (58%), continuing despite pain (37%).

Conclusion

JIA-children still participate less in sport activities and are more challenged in gym classes than healthy peers, despite close-to-normal functional ability. However, sport-active JIA-children do not differ significantly from sport-active healthy peers.

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