




A critical discourse analysis of the dominant discourses being used to portray parasport coaches in the newspaper media

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ABSTRACT

The media is a powerful outlet capable of influencing our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours about a particular phenomenon, including parasport. Despite the limited empirical research, parasport coaches play an active role in raising awareness, education, and exposure for parasport, and thus it is important to study how they are portrayed in the media. The purpose was to examine how newspaper media portrayed dominant discourses surrounding parasport coaches. Data were collected using the LexisNexis Academic database to search for full-text newspaper articles from 1 January 1999 to 1 January 2019. Eighty-three articles were included for review from 66 print and online newspaper sources. We conducted a critical discourse analysis to examine the social, political, and/or cultural discourses surrounding parasport coaches in the media. Through an iterative analytical process, three discourses were revised over time. The first discourse offered contrasting views of what it meant to be an effective parasport coach. The second discourse encompassed the ways that parasport coaches were portrayed in terms of their personal characteristics and motives. The third discourse described the working environment for parasport coaches, including the challenges and facilitators for progressing the Paralympic Movement. Overall, our media analysis provided an overarching view of how the media shapes our perception of parasport coaches. We believe our results will raise awareness to the underrepresented voices of parasport coaches, which ultimately has the potential to promote parasport participation at recreational and competitive levels around the world.

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Parasport is the term designated by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to encompass sport for athletes with impairments (IPC 2017), providing opportunities to participate in sport from grassroots to high performance levels. At the grassroots level, initiatives have been designed to increase participation rates for people with impairments, including the Para Sport Jumpstart Fund in Canada (Jumpstart 2021), the Activity Alliance in England (British Paralympic Association 2019), and Disability Sports Australia (Disability Sports Australia 2020). At the high performance level, there are a number of competitions available to athletes with impairments including, but not limited to, the Asian Para Games, the Parapan American Games, the Deaflympics, the Invictus Games, and the Paralympic Games (Disability Sport 2014). Originating in 1960, the Paralympic Games have grown exponentially to become the third largest sporting competition in the world with the most recent summer games held in Rio de Janeiro, hosting 4,328 athletes from 159 countries competing in 22

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